THE KHATRIS —A SOCIO-HISTORICAL STUDY

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FOREWORD

The ancient order of Hindu Castes is so vast and elaborate that only a few persons can claim to know it. In the heirarchy we have the Brahmins at the top and the Khatris (a corruption from the Sanskrit *Kshatriyas*) are the second in rank. The Brahmins expounded the *Vedas* and were the only ones who could preside over the religious and other ceremonies ordered by the *Vedas*. Even among the Brahmins there was a higher class and a lower group. The higher class comprised those who maintained the sacred fire and were known as Agnihotris. The others were of the lesser degree.

We learn from *Jati Mala* the names of the Brahminic and other castes. These are the names of the various divisions among the Brahmins and their number is 126. The first among them, the Kanouj Brahmins are divided into 156 classes. The Bengal Brahmins are descended from the top eight. We know their names—Maitra, Bhima, Rudra, Bhaduris etc. Then we have the Mukherjis, Gangulis, Banerjis. They are the *Rahr* and they are said be Kulina, that is of good family. And so it goes on.

There was no such attempt to classify the Khatris. Before I read this interesting book I had not known them and I knew the Brahmins. As a matter of fact they had dwindled after they ceased to be warriors. The learned author has himself stated that their number in 1901 was only one million. Today there are Khatris all over India and there are even Sikh Khatris and Muslim Khatris. This transformation is really due to the change in their pursuits. They have now become traders and shop-keepers and the religious character has become secondary.

The learned author has located the Khatris of different areas and described them and their occupations and activities. He has shown how they differ. By far the most interesting accounts are those of the Khatris who are Muslims and Sikhs. They emerged after the Muslim rule in India. Most effect was that of the teachings of Guru Nanakdevji and the other Gurus. This has changed the attitudes of Khatris in the Punjab.

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The book also gives the names and contribution of the Khatris to our community life. We find the names of great administrators, scholars and writers from the Khatris and how they were well versed in almost all the languages of our great country. We find also the names of the freedom-fighters from the Khatris. Among them were Acharya Narendra Deo, Gulzarilal Nanda and Hari Kishan Mehtab, —names which will live as long as the History of India is read.

Today there is a great change and as Campbell says, Khatris are like the jews of modern times or the Greeks under the sway of the Romans. They have come to the very top in whatever field they have chosen for their living or activity.

This book will be read with great interest and information by not only Indians but others. They will know from it of the services of this great section of our people who although second in the heirarchy of the Indians have contributed in no small measure to glory of India.

M. Hidayatullah
M.A. (Cantab.), L.C., LL.D., D. Litt.,
D.C.L., O.B.E., Bar-at-Law, Bencher Lincoln's Inn
Former Chief Justice and Vice-President of India

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PREFACE

The present study is an attempt to provide a comprehensive account of the Khatris in all its facets. It is an accepted fact that they represent the ancient Kshatriyas of the Aryan stock, and the change in nomenclature is primarily due to philological reasons. 'The warlike conquerors of one age, in the words of Campbell, 'should become astute moneylenders of another is but the ordinary course of history'. That explains why this martial class could take to trade and commerce in the medieval period of Indian history. Instances, however, are available of members of this community distinguishing themselves both in administration as also at the military front. There have been equally Khatri heads of the Indian Army, Navy and Air Wings in the post-Independence period.

A study of the distribution of the Khatris who in 1901 numbered a little more than a million in strength is based on the Census Reports. This cut-off year is suggested to eliminate chances of later migratory movements for political and economic reasons to other parts of the country. Further, the State Gazetteers were compiled more or less in the first decade of this century, and as such a real picture of Khatri society and religion could be revealed on the basis of this reliable source. The division into groups like Bunjahi, Sarin, Bahri and Khokharan as also into artificial ones like *Arhaighar*, *Charghar*, *Panjajati* and *Chahajati* had some basis, and probably a scientific explanation as well. Ceremonies, customs and Rituals connected with the community have also been brought out and properly explained.

The Khatris in the Medieval and Modern periods contributed in different segments—as administrators, soldiers and commanders, literateurs, social thinkers and religious reformers. The Sikh Gurus from Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh were all Khatris, and so also the founder of the Radhaswami Sect was a Khatri. The position of the Khatris in trade is recorded by Manrique in the 17th century as 'possessing enormous

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wealth and wielding great status'. The names of notable Khatri administrators in the Sultanate and Mughal period, are no doubt recorded in contemporary Memoirs of the rulers and other statesmen.

In the eighteenth century with the weakening of the Central authority and the emergence of provincial states, Khatri administrators and commanders do play a very important role there. A picture of the Khatris of different sub-castes at the lower rung of administration in early nineteenth century is provided by Ganesh Das in his *Char-Bagh-i-Punjab*.

The later-half of the nineteenth century as also the present one produced eminent Khatris distinguishing themselves in the fields of literature and science. They figure prominently in films, symbolising their aesthetic taste. The Khatris participated in the movements connected with socio-religious awakening in Punjab, particularly the Arya Samaj one, and also in the Freedom Struggle. Their literary contributions extend besides Hindi to other languages like Classical Persian, Urdu and English.

The Khatris and the allied groups constitute an integrated community, with similar customs, traditions and even inter-marital relations. This is fairly common. The Sikh Khatris and the Muslim Khatris are other groups. It is said about the latter that they confine their marital relations to their groups alone, while the former have close relations with their Hindu counterparts.

A study of the history of the Khatris and its relevance in the present egalitarian social structure no doubt demands some explanation. Much has been said against the negative aspects of the caste system, but its positive aspect equally is notable. It has been useful in the words of Monier-Williams, 'in promoting self-sacrifice, in securing subordination of the individual to an organised body, in restraining from vice, and in preventing pauperism'. It is supposed to be 'an automatic poor-law to begin with and the strongest form known of trade'.

The present study from the historical and sociological angles is done in an objective manner, though the subjective element is occasionally introduced for providing a coherent and faithful picture of Khatri society and its contribution in different periods.

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I am extremely grateful to Dr. M. Hidayatullah, formerly Chief Justice & Vice-President of India, for writing a Foreword to the book. My boyhood friend Padma-Bhushan Amrit Lal Nagar, and Shri Bisheswar Nath Mehrotra have my thanks for general discussion on "The Khatris", and lending me the two volume "History of The Muslim Khatris in Pakistan" (in Gujrati).

The book is dedicated to the memory of my younger daughter Taruna Puri, the last to come and the first to leave for her heavenly home in January 1980.

B.N. Puri

November 15, 1987

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The history of the Khatris is closely related to the tradition, physique and locality of their origin. The philological aspect of the change of the term 'Kshatriya' into 'Khatri' is equally important but the vocational take over from martial to other avocations connected with trade and commerce or as a writer class, not excluding administrative and military responsibilities in numerous cases, could be viewed in terms of changing circumstances and adverse situations. The occupational basis of caste could not be an invariable and inviolable phenomenon. The struggle for existence has always been too severe and the facing conditions equally varied. The character and capacity of individuals too has been diverse to permit of this inviolability of the hereditary nature of occupation being too long maintained. The community of blood and the community of occupation thus cease to be identical with provision made for vocational mobility even in the same caste group. Society, as such, is not solid but liquid, and portions of it have been rising and sinking and changing their position in the social gradation. A set of artificial rules grafted on the social prejudices have no doubt made the task of social changes difficult. Even with the change of avocation, more towards the lower scale, the position in the social hierarchy in general is not disturbed. Thus, a Brahmin taking to agriculture or even to wood work does not cease to be a Brahmin—the individual or the group is assigned another nomenclature in the social framework, like *Tyagi* or Bhumihara Brahmins of the recent past, and *Kastabhid* Brahmana—or 'clever of wood' of ancient India. A Brahmin devoid of penance (*tapa*) and learning (*sruta*) remains, in the words of the great sage Patanjali, only a Brahmin by caste (*jati Brahmana*). Persons or groups of different castes could

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weld themselves into a professional group called *sreni* or guild. In inscriptions there are references to Kshatriyas as oil-millers (*tailika*). In this context Ibbetson in his valuable work on *Punjab Castes* (1916) makes certain observations which appear to be valid and necessitate deeper consideration for an object we approach towards caste as an institution. He feels that 'there are Brahmanas who are looked upon as outcastes by those who under the four-fold classification, would be classed as Sudras; That there is no such thing as a Vaishya now existing: that it is very doubtful indeed whether there is such a thing as a Kshatriya and if there is, no two people are agreed to as to where we shall look for him, and that Sudra has no present significance some as a convenient term of abuse to apply to somebody else. Nothing can be more variable and more difficult to define than caste which is a social far more than a religious institution, and that conversion from Hinduism to Islam has not necessarily the slightest effect upon caste. These observations need be kept in view while recording or rendering the history of the Khatris or of any other caste in India.

... The Khatris whose distribution in the old Punjab was very well marked, are described by George Campbell in his 'Ethnology of India' as 'Superior to other castes in physique, in manliness, and in energy, while trade is their main occupation, in fact they have broader and more distinguishing features.' Besides monopolising the trade of the Punjab and the greater part of Afghanistan and doing a good deal beyond those limits, they are in the Punjab the chief civil administrators, and have almost all literary work in their hands. So far as the Sikhs have a priesthood, they are moreover, the priests or gurus of the Sikhs. Both Nanak and Govind were and the Sodis and Bedis of the present day, are Khatris. Thus, they are in fact in the Punjab, as far as a more energetic race will permit them, all that Maratha Brahmins are in the Maharastra country besides engrossing the trade while the Maratha Brahmins have not. They are not usually military in character but are quite capable of using the sword when necessary. Dewan Sawan Mal, Governor of Multan, and his successor Mularaja, and very many of Ranjit Singh's chief functionaries were Khatris. There is a record of a Khatri Dewan of Badakshan or Kunduz, and I believe of a Khatri governor of Peshawar under the Afghans.

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The Emperor Akbar's famous minister Todarmal was a Khatri. Altogether there can be no doubt that these Khatris are one of the most acute, energetic and remarkable race in India. The Khatris are a very fine, fair, handsome race and are generally educated.

The physical appearance of the Khatris, ensuring them a place much higher in the social hierarchy and accepting their claim as the best one to be the descendants of the old Kshatriyas was accepted by Sir George Campbell in his work on the '*Ethnology of India*' and earlier in the 'Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal' of 1866 (No. XXXXVI). This higher social status of the community was duly accepted by the Privy Council (7 Moores Indian Appeals) as also in several judgements of Indian High Courts. The absence of military traits and engagement in army manaeuvres was not hereditary or a natural phenomenon. In fact, Cunningham in his *History of the Sikhs* duly acknowledges the ancient military spirit frequently reappearing amongst the once royal 'Kshutrees' and their becoming able governors of provinces and skilful leaders of armies. Another notable historian in the eighties of the last century, Sir William Hunter, accepts the claim of the Khatris as descendants from the original military class, taking, of course, Khatri as a contraction of Kshatriya. So also, J.C. Nesfield in his work entitled '*Caste System of India*' (p. 37) considers the Khatris to be the highest and most important of all the trading castes in India. The name Khatri, according to him, is merely the modern pronunciation of Kshatriya, and hence the origin of the caste should not be an 'Ethnological puzzle'. The late Mr. Sherring also in his work on '*Hindu Tribes and Castes*' (p. 278) records no difference in the pronunciation of the two names Khatri and Kshatriya.

The Kshatriya status of the Khatris was challenged by some people—not necessarily scholars of repute, headed by one Jogendra Nath Bhattacharya, the author of a book called '*The Hindu Tribes and Castes*'. For want of sufficient information or under the influence of a personal grudge against the Burdwan Raj, he proposed that 'since the majority of Khatris live by trade or by service as clerks and accountants, their caste status ought it seems 'to be intermediate between that of the Rajputs on the one hand and the Baniyas and the Kayasthas on the

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other. Further in his words, 'in their outward appearance the Khatris lack the manly vigour and the broad forehead of the Brahmanas. But they are generally very handsome, with their slender figures and their blue sparkling eyes and their acquiline nose. Some of them look exactly like the Jews whom they resemble also in character. But there is not found among them either the enterprise of the Parsis or the literary industry of the Brahmanas and the Kayasthas'. (p. 138).

H.H. Risley, the author of '*The Tribes and Castes of Bengal*' earlier endorsed Bhattacharya's views on the Khatris, though based on imperfect and incorrect data and that too utilised by a person of nebulous learning and wanting in historical perspective and correct analysis of the data. In Risley's words, 'it seems to me that the internal organization of the caste furnishes almost conclusive proof that they are descended from neither Brahmanas nor Kshatriyas, and that the theory connecting them with the latter tribe rests upon no firmer foundation than a resemblance of name, which for all we know may be wholly accidental. Their features and complexion indeed entitle them to be ranked as Aryans of comparatively pure lineage, but among their numerous sections one finds none of those territorial names which are characreristic of the Rajput sects. Were they descended from the same stock as the Rajputs, they must have lived the same set of section-names, and it is difficult to see why they should have abandoned these for less distinguished patronymics? In addition to their own sections, they have also standard Brahmanical *gotras*, but these have no influence upon marriage and have clearly been borrowed *honoris causa* from the Sarasvata Brahmans who serve them as priests. If then, it is at all necessary to connect the Khatris with the ancient four-fold system of castes, the only group to which we can affiliate them is the Vaishyas. (Vol. I, pp. 478 sq).

Richard Burn, the Census Superintendent for North West Province and Oudh, under instructions from Risley, the Census Commissioner for India issued a provisional scheme on February 25th, 1901 for the classification of all the Hindu castes according to the old four-fold division, and placing the Khatris under the group 'Vaishyas and Allied Castes', adding a note to the enquiry whether the caste should be placed there or in Group II (Kshatriyas) where it had been often placed. He

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quoted Risley's opinion that the names of the sub-castes agreed more with those of the Vaishyas than the Kshatriyas. One need not go into the commotion that this communique from the Census Commissioner had created in the Khatri community. It did generate energy among the Khatris in general and the elite and academicians in particular who joined hands, organized meetings in important towns of which the Bareilly one in 1901 under the Presidentship of Raja Ban Behari Kapoor was the most prominent one. It finally resulted in passing a number of resolutions affirming their claim to be the true representatives of the ancient Kshatriyas. It was admitted that the Khatris neither had nor even had a 'tie' with the Rajputs and differed widely from them in all respects. It was, however, frankly stated and conclusively proved with references to authorities on every point that the circumstances far from weakening the cause of the Khatris went against the other party. The wide gulf existing between the two races were declared to be the natural consequence of the fact that the Khatris were the pure descendants of the old Vedic Kshatriyas and the followers of the Hindu Dharma Sastras in all their bearings while the Rajputs totally failed to exhibit traces that could justify their claim to that honour.

The nightmare of impending social inferiority complex consequent to the circular placing Khatris in the class of Vaishyas and that too in an arbitrary manner completely ignoring the earlier opinions of Campbell, and others, finally passed away after Risley had perused a number of memorials and letters from various Associations and individuals. These in his words, 'exhibit considerable research and form a valuable contribution to the history of the Khatris'. Risley finally recorded that 'the evidence laid before me seems to make it clear that in British India at any rate, the Khatris are generally believed to be the modern representatives of the Kshatriyas of the Hindu tradition'. He accordingly instructed the Superintendents of Census to include the Khatris under the heading Kshatriyas in their classification of castes.

The stir against the slur cast by the trio—Jagendranath Bhattacharya, Burn and Risley—bad aroused the passions of the community which was not lacking in self-respect and community pride and one good thing that came out of this ordeal

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was the *History of the Khattris* by Moti Lal Seth, Deputy Inspector of School in Agra (1904). It was written with a spirit of dedication with such academic tools and resources as were available to the author at that time. It is no doubt a pioneer work and demands all praise as also respect. The reference to the views of eminent scholars and quotations from books on the position of Khatris and their status are no doubt very valuable and did serve the purpose for which these were recorded by the author. A new line of approach, however, is needed in presenting the history of the Khatris, utilizing, of course, the available data from this work as also from other subsequent publications, particularly the volumes of the 'Epigraphic India', which have scores of inscriptions mentioning Kshatriyas whose status as also their avocation could be recorded for purposes of noticing the vocational mobility among the Kshatriyas in general.

A good bit of information is also available from the literary sources on the traditional account of the extermination of the Kshatriyas race by Parasuram of the legendary fame, and its evidentiary value. In this context the role of the foreign races —Achaemenians, Greeks, Sakas, Parthians, Kushanas, Hunas and the Gurjaras, besides the original Aryan one has to be considered. They came here, conquered some parts of the country, and were finally assimilated into the local population. Confrontation of two cultures—indigenous and foreign—always led to the alien one having an upper hand, but its final assimilation in the local ethos has always been a natural phenomenon. As such, the area where the new comers ruled is bound to have traces of the lost vestiges of foreign impacts on the local population. Cultural traits and symbols are carried over from generation to generation, of course, diluting with the passage of time. This aspect also demands fuller consideration in the light of status of not only the Khatris but Rajputs and many others as well claiming the status of the Kshatriyas.

It might therefore be desirable to assess the position of the Khatris from three different angles—philological, traditional and vocational, before switching over to the main plank, namely the distribution of the Khatris in Pre-Partition India, so as to include the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province and Sind which had huge chunks of Khatri population. In fact, in many

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divisions of the old Punjab, the Khatris constituted a good segment of the population. As such, the political division of the country need not impose any brake on this cultural study in a wider context. It would be more pertinent to record the distribution of the Khatris in different divisions of the Punjab according to the Census of 1891, 1901 and 1911. This would be equally helpful in assessing the growth rate as also the decline of the Khatri population not only in the Punjab but also in other provinces.

The Term Khatri and Kshatriya

Philologists would no doubt agree that in the light of Vararuchi's contention, the two terms are synonymous. While in Pali, in the absence of *Ksha*, *tra* and *Jna* as also the siblants *Sa* and *Sha*, the question of change does not arise and *Ksha* is taken as *Kha*, in Prakrit *Kha* is substituted for the Sanskrit *Shka*, *Ska* and *Ksatra*, as in the following forms: Skt. *Pushkara* —a 'lake' Prakrit *Pokkharo*; Skt. *Skandha*—'shoulder', Prakrit *Khando*: Skt. *Yaksha*—'a demi-god', Prakrit *Jakkho* and Skt. *Kshata*—'wounded', Prakrit *Khado*. In other words the Sanskrit conjunct *Ksha* (क्ष) is corrupted into Prakrit *Kha*—in the Sanskrit word or root Kshata and from this word Kshatriya takes its forms—*Kshatat trayate Kshatriyah*. Thus, according to the Grammarian Vararuchi, the Sanskrit conjunct *Ksha* of the word Kshatriya is changed into *Kha* in Prakrit. This change is accepted not only in Prakrit but also by all Indian vernaculars derived from Prakrit. A long list of such Sanskrit words and their Hindi forms is noted by John Beams in his *Comparative Grammar of the Modern Indian Languages* (Vol. I, p. 312). A few such words in Sanskrit and Hindi forms are Skt. *Kshetra*—Hindi *Kheta*; *Kshama—Khama*; *Laksha—Lakha*; *Kshara—Khara*; *Iksha—Ikha*; *Kshira—Khira*; and many more such forms. The change of *Kshatriya* into *Khatriya* is thus warranted by the rule laid down by the Prakrit grammarian Vararuchi. The substitution of ri (ऋ) for *riya* is a philological change common in Hindi as may be seen from other examples of Sanskrit words: Skt. *Priyatama*—Hindi *Pitam* (husband); *Jitendriya—Jitendri* and so on. Hence the change from Sanskrit Kshatriya to Khatri is in consonance with the Prakrit rule and Hindi usuage. Absence of the Sanskrit *Ksha* in several other Indian languages like Gujrati;

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Urdu, Gurmukhi and the foreign Persian, provides *Kha* for *Ksha* in these languages as well. Thus, in Gujrati, one finds *Akkhara* for *Akshara; Ankha* for *Aksha, Khema* for *Kshema* and *Khatri* for *Kshatriya* (Shapurji Edulji—*Gujarati Grammar*. 1867, p. 12). The great Sanskrit scholar, R.G. Bhandarkar in his Wilson Lecture on 'the Philology of the Indian Vernaculars' also quotes a few examples such as *Karoja* for *Karya, Dharam* for *Dharma* and *Khatri* for *Kshatriya*. (JBBRAS. XVII. Pt. II. 1889. pp. 111-112).

The position of the Kshatriyas representing the second group in the social hierarchy of the Hindu castes equally calls for historical consideration in this context. The two terms *Kshatriya* and *Rajanya* are taken as synonymous, but in strict application, the former in the past had a wider denotation than the latter. The term *Rajanya* was used for the ruling class, while Kshatriya connoted the mere fighting men—the retainers who had military functions. The two are occasionally distinguished, as in the *Aitareya Brahmana* (VII. 20; *Vedic Index* I p. 205) a Rajanya asks a Kshatriya for a place for sacrifice. Towards the common people, the Kshatriya stood in a relation of well-nigh unquestioned superiority. The main duty of the Kshatriya was readiness for war. There is no reference to Kshatriyas engaging in agriculture or in trade or commerce. The *Nirukta*, however, gives a solitary instance of Devapi, a king's son becoming the Purohita of his younger brother Santanu. This is a late story based on some tradition but not traceable in Vedic literature. Panini, the great grammarian refers to *Kshatriyagana* (IV-I-38) which was endowed with sovereignty.

In the Pali Jatakas, the word Khattiya is used for denoting the members of the old Aryan nobility as also those families of the non-Aryan clans who could retain their princely status. In the Mahabharata it is supposed to include all the royal military vassals and feudal chiefs and is not co-extensive with all warriors. It is interesting to note that in the *Dialogues of the Buddha* (I.97-107) while discussing social divisions, the Khattiyas precede the Bahmanas. (*Khattiya Seshtho jana tasmin*). The social status of the Khattiyas is also recorded in the *Nikayas* as also in the *Vinayas*. The determining yardstick was not wealth, as a very small percentage of the Khattiyas are

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mentioned as wealthy. All kings and chieftains are no doubt described as Khattiyas. There is a reference to Khattiya Kula or a Khattiya clan—a Princely house in the *Vinaya* (II.161) and also to *Khattiya vamsa* of aristocratic descent in the *Sumangala Vilasini* (I.267). The Pali literature records only Khattiya vamsa or kula in place of Kshatriya. There is no substitute for another term *Kshattri* or *Kshattritta* used earlier in Sanskrit in the sense of a charioteer or attendant (Monier-Williams. X.12.26, p. 325 c). It is, however, used later on by Manu (X.12.26) for a person of a mixed caste (X-1) and by Yajnavalkya in the sense of 'the son of a female slave' (I.94). The two terms are quite distinct, and Pali *Khattiya*—Hindi *Khatri* represents the Sanskrit *Kshatriya* and *Kshattri*. The word *Khattiya* for *Kshatriya* is also noticed in the *Vikramoravasi* of Kalidasa. Hear, O Raja! this man destined to live long was entrusted to my care in a state of helplessness. His holy Khatiasa (Kshatriya) rites have all been performed in their entirety by the holy sage Chivan Rishi. The Vidushaka in his usual Prakrit also refers to Khattiya Kumara or Kshatriya princes.

An interesting reference to Khatiya unnoticed earlier, is in the Nasik inscription of Vasisthaputra Pulumani dated in the year 19. It records the exploits of Gautami-putra Siri Satakarni, who crushed down the pride and conceit of the Kshatriyas and destroyed the Sakas, Yavanas and Pahlawas and rooted out the Khakharata race. The Kshatriyas are mentioned as *Khatiyas* in this record (EI.VIII. p. 61). This inscription is important for two reasons. It distinguishes the Khatiyas from the Khaharatas as well as from the Sakas, Yavanas and the Pahlavas. Secondly, it refers to the clash between the Brahmin and the Kshatriya as well as other foreign forces with the victory of the former over the latter. It might as well belie the theory proposed by Baines that 'the Khatris and Aroras communities are descended from one of the Saka colonies (*Ethnology* p. 55). This matter would demand fuller consideration later on. At the moment one has only to concentrate on the philological equation of the Prakrit *Khatiya*—Hindi Khatri with Sanskrit Kshatriya. This Nasik inscription is no doubt a valuable piece of evidence on the point.

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Kaṭha, Kathroi and Khatriaioi

Besides the Indian literary sources—Sanskrit, Pali and Prakrit —noticing Kshatriyas—Khattiyas as a class in the social hierarchy, and their role as rulers and also as rank and file of the army, equally corroborated by inscriptions, the Greek sources are equally helpful in this context. The historians, accompanying Alexander refer to the tribe of Kathaioi who inhabited the regions lying to the east of the Hydraotes (Ravi) or between the two rivers (the Hydarpes (Jhelum) and the Akesines (Chenab). They are described by ancient authors as one of the most powerful nation of India. They strongly resisted Alexander's advance. A very singular thing is noticed by these Greek historian about their beauty. In Kathaia an uncommon value is attached to this quality as much and the handsomest person is chosen as the king. Another peculiar custom among the Kathians noticed by these historians is about the husband and wife choosing each other, and the wives burning themselves along with their dead husbands. According to McCrindle, who translated these texts in his work '*India in Classical Greek Writings*' (p. 37), 'their very name indicates their warlike propensities and predominance, for if it is not identical with that of the military caste, *Kshatriya*, it is atleast a modified form of that word'. Arrian subsequently (VI.15) mentions a tribe of independent Indians whose name, according to McCrindle, is a still closer transliteration of Kshatriya, the Xathroi whose territories lay between the Indus and the lower course of the Akesines (Chenab).

Ptolemy, an ancient Geographer of the second century A.D. for the first time refers to the *Khatriaoi*. According to him, the parts farther in land are possessed by the Poulindai, Agriophagoi and beyond them are the *Khatriaioi* to whom belong these cities some lying east and some west of the Indus—

Nigramgramma	124°	28°.15′
Antakhara	122°	27°.20′
Sondasanna	123°	26°.50′
Syrnisika	121°	26°.30′
Patistama	121°	25°.0′
Tisapatinga	123°	26°.20′

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The Poulindai and Agriophagoi are described as occupying the parts northward of those mentioned above. Pulinda is a name applied to a variety of aboriginal races. Agriphagoi is a Greek epithet signifying that the Pulinda was a tribe that subsisted on raw flesh and roots or wild fruits. In Yule's map they are located in the north-east of the Rann of Kacha lying between the Khatrioi in the North and Larike in the South. Ptolemy's reference to the Khatrioi might be viewed in the context of the reference to *Khattiyas* in the Nasik inscription of Siri Pulumavi, more or less of the same time. One is therefore tempted to identify the two. Gautamputra Satakarni's conquest extended upto Sindh and Sauvira (Multan) and as such the kingdom of the Khatrioi of Ptolemy could have come within the ambit of his conquest. Surendranath Majumdar Sastri, who edited Ptolemy's text, questions Lassen's interpretation of Kathians with their capital at Sangala or Sagala (Sialkot), formerly the capital of the Madras, with the degraded Kshatriyas. It is reasonable to presume at the moment on the basis of the cumulative evidence adduced above that the Kathioi, Khatriaioi and the Khattiyas appear to be synonymous—all representing the Kshatriyas—Khatriyas—Khatris. This name, according to Cunningham and Sastri represents a community spreading over an immense area in North-West India from the Hindukush as far as Bengal, and from Nepal to Gujarat under slightly variant forms—*Kathis, Kathisa Khatris, Khetras, Kathir* and others. It is further presumed that the Kathis issuing from the lower parts of the Punjab, established themselves in Saurashtra, and gave the name of *Kathiawad* to the Great Peninsula of Gujarat.

Vocational Mobility and Caste Status

Avocation need not be taken as a determining factor for assessing the status of a community in social hierarchy. All those Census Commissioners as well as scholars who worked on Hindu castes seem to have been completely oblivious of this fact. In Rig-veda there is a hymn—*Karum-aham tato-bhishaj-Cupala prakshini-nana*—'A Bardam I, my father a physician and mother a grinder of corn on stone'. Even when caste emerged as a strong phenomenon, there was always provision for vocational mobility from higher to the lower and in rare cases in the opposite direction as well. Even the Smritikaras

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have made provision for such situations as warrant a change in profession due to adverse circumstances. There are numerous historical instances, as for instance, Mayura-Sarman, the founder of the Kadamba dynasty. From an orthodox and learned Brahmin family deliberately exchanging Brahmana's role for that of a Kshatriya warrior, and eventually setting up his dynasty. Maharaja Matrivishnu, great grandson of Brahmana saint Indra Vishnu, the Brahmana kings of Ujjayini, Jijhoti and Mahesvarapura in Hsuen-tsang's time, the Vaishya kings of Thanesvara and Paryatra and Sudra kings of Matipura and Sindh at the same time were otber non-Kshatriya rulers. There are also references to Kshatriyas as cultivator of field (EI.I. 161, III. 20), or as oil-millers (EI.I. 159) or as merchant (EI. XIX. 50). There are also instances of inter-caste marriages, of course within the regality or the upper caste people taking wives from the lower one without loss of status. The Vaisya Prabhavati of the Gupta family was married to the Brahmana Rudrasena of the Vakataka dynasty, and Kadamba Brahmana girl being accepted in the Gupta family. Harshas' daughter, a Vaisya, was married to the Kshtriya king of Valabhi. The great poet Bana's father had a Shudra wife by whom he had two sons (Harsh. I). The Brahmin poet Rajasekhara had married a talented Kshatriya lady Avantisundari. There are also cases of Brahmanas and Kshatriya princes marrying slaves and courtesans. Sometimes there were two wives from two different castes, as for instance, the Gurjara Pratihara Harichandra of the Mandor line. He was well versed in the Vedas and the Sastras. The sons of the Brahmin wife were Pratihara Brahmanas, and those from the Kshatriya one—Rajni Bhadra—could not check their veneer for power and finally founded a kingdom. They are recorded as 'drinkers of wine'. In this context reference might as well be made to the division of Hindu society as recorded by Ibn-Khurdadba. He places *Sabkufria* as the foremost class among whom are men of high caste, and from whom kings are chosen'. The people of the other six classes pay homage to the men of this class only. *Brahmna*—the second class is described as abstaining from wine and fermented liquor. The third class is named *Kataria* who drink not more than three cups of wine and their daughters are given in marriage to the sons of the Brahma class but not otherwise.

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The *Sudaria*, *Basuria* and Sandalia are described as professional husband men; artificent and domestics, and menials respectively. The last class—*Lahud*—with their women fond of adorning themselves, and men of amusements and skill, were probably entertainers. *Kataria* of Ibn-Khurdadba appear to be closer to *Khatri* in pronunciation and usage rather than to Sanskrit *Kshatriya*.

The Neo-Kshatriyas or Rajputs

The Kshatriyas had not ceased to exist and had probably augmented their strength with the assimilation of all those foreigners who came to India from the north-west. The Agni kula tradition and the emergence of Rajputs from the fire pit could be related to the purification of such foreigners who entered India and were finally accepted and assimilated in Hindu society. They were accorded the status of martial class or the regality in the social set-up. This was nothing new. There are much earlier records of such foreigners like Ushavadata—Rishabhadatta—a Saka accepting Brahmanism and making donations for the welfare of the Brahmin priests in the form of gold coins, as also getting a number of Brahmin girls married (EI. VIII). This was done at the famous Pushkaratirtharaja or pilgrimage centre. Much earlier, the Greek Heliodora, an ambassador from the Court of Antialkidas to that of the Sunga ruler Bhagabhadra had set up a Garudhvaja in honour of Vishnu at Vidisa (M.P.). Rudradaman, another foreigner probably a Saka since he used this Samvat in his record at Junagarh, was elected by people of all castes whom he promised to protect. The Pahlavas too were accepted in Hindu society, and one such inscription from the south refers to a Pahlava—Pallava Kshatriya king. The emergence of this neo-Kshatriya class called Rajput was a historical necessity for political and socio-religious reasons. The long breach between the heyday of the post-Vedic ruling classes and the genesis of the Rajput, as proposed by Baines (p. 30) demands fuller consideration. He further suggests that the former were apparently staunch supporters of Buddhism in its inception, a movement in their favour, while the latter arose with the force which deposed that religion in India and established their position upon the ruins of the States which had professed it. The ground for the evolu-

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tion of a new military nobility seems to have been prepared by the establishment of successive sovereignties of Saka race. In the continued disturbance which occurred between the first century before Christ and the downfall of the principal Scythian dynasties in the 7th century A.D., the Brahmanic powers were wont to invoke the aid of any arm, Indian or foreign, which might promote the defeat of their rivals. The title Rajaputa—Sanskrit Rajaputra, originally, in all probability, derived from function denotes an order of hereditory nobility with constantly enlarging circle with the passage of time. The essentials of the position, as suggested by Baines, are the chieftainship of a tribe or clan and the command of an armed force with the possession of a substantial landed estate and a scrupulous regard for the strict following of Brahmanical rules and regulations as to marriage, domestic customs and contacts with other classes. None of the Rajputs prove their pedigree further back than the fifth century of the Christian era, and four of the leading tribes, according to Baines (p. 31) known as the Agnikula or Fire-clans, derive their origin from a specific act of creation under Brahmanic auspices, whereby the sun and fire worshipping Huns or Gurjara was converted into the blue blood of Rajputana, and became the forefathers of the Sisodia Cauhan, Parmer, Parihar and Solanki or Calukya, and perhaps Kachavaha line. It may however be noted that Rajput dynasties did not rise to power until some time after the Huna supremacy had been broken in the 6th century. The genealogy of the Rajputs at the earliest starts from about the 7th century. Further, the contests and confrontations with the Muslim invaders of a few centuries later had the effect of consolidating the Rajput devotion to the scrupulous observance of Brahmanic injunctions. Where Brahmanical influence was supreme, even change of religion had little effect upon caste regulations. It is thus evident that the assimilation of foreigners into the Indian or rather Hindu social set up was a continuing process, and the source for new entrants never dried up. The Kshatriya class as such was bound to have several gradations or rather classes within themselves as were evolved at different times. As such, there were bound to be differences in behavioural pattern and in avocations too. The original Kshatriya ruling and fighting had to pave the way for the new entrant more virulent and

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vigorous relegating the former to a more docile and demean avocation in life. Even among the Rajputs, the rank and file are cultivators. (Baines 33). One should therefore except the earlier Kshatryas class; the middle one, and the later being the descendants of those foreign tribes who entered India at different times.

The Tradition Massacre Story

The story of Parasurama annihilating the race of the Kshatriyas as annaled in the *Bhavishyotara Purana* (Chapter 40 & 41) as also in the *Anugita* seems to be based on traditional rivalry between the Brahmin and Kshatriyas as for instance between Vasishta and Visvamitra, which continued for ages. Some traces of such struggle are also recorded in inscriptions of Brahmin rulers like Gautamiputra Siri Satakarni and Mayur Sarman, who were both anti-Kshatriyas and are supposed to have crushed the pride and arrogance of the Kshatriyas. Rudradaman equally boasts of having defeated the Brahmin Andhra ruler of the Satakarni dynasty but did not destroy him because he happened to be his son-in-law. There are also instances of people taking totemistic names or changing over to another avocation other than the one prescribed for them in difficult situations. Thus, the Sakyas of Kapilavastu, the Kshatriya tribe to which Buddha belonged, and extremely conscious of their blood purity, took tolemistic names when Vidudabha wanted to exterminate their very existence. This was in revenge for the foul game played against his father by passing on a Sudra girl in the form of a Sakyan princess. The Mauryas —from Mayura—peacock—were the descendants of the Sakyas. As such, the extermination of the Kshatriyas and the protection of a few young Kshatriya lads by a Vaishya couple, need not cause much surprise. The story, however, appears to be extremely exaggerative. If the Sarasvata Brahmins taking over the custody of these few lads, or pretending to be the fathers of the pregnant women be accepted, than one would not have found any trace of the Kshatriyas in the Punjab. We may therefore accept only this much of truth in the story that the Sarasvata Brahmins did shelter those Kshatriyas or their descendants and families at a time of some holocaust of which Parasurama was the main instrument. Such instances of protection and familia-

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rity could be traced in hundred in days of communal conflagrations in our times.

It is suggested by some writers who have dabbled into the history of the Khatris that the rise of Buddhism brought about another crisis or split in the Kshatriya class—the first one being at the hands of Parasurama. They suggest that Chandragupta Maurya himself a Sudra—being born of a Sudra woman Mura—wanted to be accepted as a Kshatriya. This was resisted by the Kshatriyas who however fled in large number to Punjab where most of them became traders. The neo-Vedic, Buddhist Kshatriyas, however, accepted him. This theory of Kshatriyas migration from Bihar to Punjab is incredible. The Buddhist and Jain sources are unanimous in calling Chandragupta a Kshatriya. In the *Mudra-raksha* he is called a *Vrishala* not necessarily a Sudra.

One thing, however, is clear, namely the elastic position or status of the Kshatriyas in the Hindu social organization. All the foreigners who entered India and accepted the hierarchy of the Brahmins were accorded social status according to their original position. Patanjali in his comment on the Sutra—*Sudranam-aniravasitanam* refers to the status of foreigners—namely Greeks—who were given the status of a Sudra but the plate touched by them was not polluted. The regality among these foreigners of course retained its stature under sanction accorded by the Brahmins. We should therefore expect Ksatriyas of the earlier immigrants—the Vedic ones, those of the later times roughly in the first two centuries—consisting of the Greeks, Sakas and Kushanas, and later on the Huns. The Gujaras too are considered as foreigners but their indigenous origin seems to have a better claim. There are also instances of aborigines, and wild tribes claiming the status of Kshatriyas. Baines refers to a large portion of the Mongoloid population of Manipur pausing into the rank of Kshatriyas. The leading families of various Kol tribes are also being referred to as Rajputs. The same phenomenon is traced by him in Nepal, Kangra and Orissa (p. 30).

Summing up

The starting point rather the premises of this long introduction is that the Khatris constitute one of the few castes who

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could claim the status of Kshatriyas of the ancient social class grouping. Their physique, fair complexion and handsome appearance, pointed nose with manliness and energy with broader and distinguishing features have a rightful claim to be placed in this earliest group of the Kshatriyas associated with the Aryans and the Vedic culture. Their Vedic gotras symbolising association with the Rishis, as also the Sarasvata Brahmins —their Purohits or Priests and their inalienable affinity provide an Index to their Vedic origin. The change from Sanskrit *Kshatriya* to *Khattiya* and finally Khatri in Hindi and other languages was purely philological without involving any mixture in their blood. Recent studies in analysing blood groups and determining cognate relationship and affinity point to Khatri being very close to Vedic Aryans and their off-shoot Iranians who constituted one group known as *wiros*. The change in vocation is not relevant to the determination of status in the social hierarchy. A good many castes have been quoted of persons indulging in avocations other than those prescribed for them. In this context Campbell pointed out earlier (op. cit) in his work on '*Ethnology of India*', 'The warlike conquerors of one age should become astute money lenders of another, is but the ordinary course of history. Jews, Greeks, Lambards and others are instances in point, and perhaps when the New Zealanders rule in England, the English may be known as the Khatris of these parts'. The declension of the Kshatriya from soldiers and sovereigners into traders and shopkeepers, in the words of Cunningham (p. 13n) has a parallel in the history of the Jews. Men of active minds will always find employment for themselves and thus we know what Greeks became under the victorious Romans, and what they are under the ruling Turks (in 1848). We likewise know that the vanquished Moors were the most industrious of the subjects of medieval Spain; that the Mughals of British India are gradually applying themselves to the business of exchange, and it is plain that the traffickers as well as the priests of Suzan England, Frankish Gaul and Gothic Italy must have been chiefly of Roman descent.

Another theory mooted out by some scholars is that the Khatris and Aroras are descended from one of the Saka colonies which long held the tracts—constituting the western region of upper Sindh—the cradle of their caste. (Baines 33).

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It is further proposed that the Khatris in other parts of India trace their origin back to the Punjab or North Rajputana, and were probably driven southwards by one of the Scythic cataclysms, and like others similarly circumstanced, found themselves obliged to take to new means of livelihood (p. 34). It is also proposed while recording the early history of the Khatris that during Alexander's invasion, they constituted the Kathoi republic which concentrated on beauty and comely appearance and the husband and wife choose each other. The Greek historians accompanying the Macedonian accord praise for the fidelity of the ladies who immolated themselves along with their dead husbands. In the second century A.D., another tribe—Khatriayi—is mentioned by Ptolemy. The Egyptian geographer, who controlled several cities. It is rather tempting to propose identification of this tribe with the Khattiyas mentioned in an inscription of the Satakarni king Pulumavi.

The reference to the neo-Kshatriyas constituting probably the third group is called Rajputra or Rajputs who were foreigners and the Agnikula tradition is symbolical of their purification ceremony. It is these Rajputs who constituted the yardstick for placing martial class in Group II of the Census Report. The Census Commissioner Risley and his colleagues seem to have forgotten that notable Rajputs were fighters or had taken to arms as a profession and were cultivators. It has been proposed that many a foreigners like the Kols in Chota Nagpur and even those with Mongoloid blood intruded into the category of Rajputs. Nepal, Kangra and Orissa also provided many such instances of tribes or groups figuring in that category. In the final analysis it is extremely difficult to categorise the status of any caste except on the basis of historical tradition, physical appearance and location. While the first two aspects have been considered in a fairly detailed manner, the location of the Khatris—the distribution of their population in Pre-Independence India, particularly at the beginning of this century need be taken into fuller consideration. The analysis of this data would be extremely helpful in assessing their position in the social hierarchy as also in tracing movements in different directions.

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CHAPTER 2

The Distribution and Classification of Khatris in India

A study of the distribution of the Khatri population in the last decade of the 19th century and the first one of the present one should be a correct index for analysing and assessing the position of the Khatris in the socioeconomic milieu of the country. They were prominent in the old Punjab which at that time included North-West Frontier Province (created 1901) as well, forming in some districts a ratio of forty a thousand of the total population. Such was the case in Jhelum and Rawalpindi districts according to the Census of 1891. As the Khatris proceeded eastwards, the population ratio dwindled coming down to between 30-40 in the Shahpur, Gujrat, Jhang, Gujaranwala, Lahore and Amritsar and between 20-30 per thousand in Gurdaspur, Kapurthala, Jullundhar and Hoshiarpur. In other districts it varied under 20 per thousand or roughly 2 per cent of the population. In the centre of the province and in the direction of Rawalpindi, the Khatris numbered 447,933, with an increase of 6.84% since 1881. The increase in Lahore was 22.5% or 7,366, in Gurdaspur 16.9% or 2787 and in Pindi 7.7% or 3,175. In Kangra the figure fell from 7,760 to 1,378.

The Aroras, numbering 6,67,197, holding the trade of the south-west had an overall increase of 10.9% ; 7.1% in Multan, 11.5% in Jhang; 11.9% in Montgomery; 19.6% in Lahore and 16.6% in Shahpur. The total rise of Khatri population in the Punjab showed a variation of 31.5% between 1881 and 1931 on the basis of the data given in the Census of India Vol. XVIII Part I Report. The figures as given in the reports are 1881, 392,000; 1891, 4,19,000; 1901, 4,34,000; 1911, 4,24,000; 1921, 4,53,000, and 1931, 5,16,000. As many Hindu had boycotted

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the Census because of the Civil Disobedience Movement, the figures for 1931 could be expected to be more than that. The Census reports from 1931 onwards are not recorded here. Those of the earlier periods are in three categories : districts which have recorded a rise, those which suggest a fall or drop out, and those which are more or less constant. This statistical analysis might as well be in the context of districts having more than 10,000, those having between 4000-10,000 and thirdly those with less than 4,000 Khatris. The North-West Frontier Province alone, according to the figures provided in the Imperial Gazetteer of India (1908) accounted for 34,000 Khattris, with 13,000 in Peshawar area alone and 13,000 in Hazara. In the Punjab those districts having more than 10,000 Khatris in 1901 were Amritsar 34,000, Gujaranwala 26,000, Gujrat 18,000, Gurdaspur 17,000, Hoshiarpur 21,000, Jhang 21,000, Jhelum 31,000, Lahore 45,000, Jalandhar 25,000, Ludhiana 16,000 and Ferozpur 11,000. In the second group below 10,000, Ambala recorded 7,000, Kangra 7,000, Delhi 5,000, Montgomery 5000. The last group below 5000, were the districts of Miranwali 2000, Dera Ismail Khan 3000, Dera Ghazi Khan 2000, Bannu 2200, Kohat 1300 and Muzaffargarh 1800. Jammu & Kashmir accounted for 48,000 Khatris.

A study of this statistical figure would reveal a clustering of the Khatris mostly in Western Punjab in the Rawalpindi division and Hazara and in Central Punjab. East of Ludhiana the Khatri population dwindles and even Delhi at that time recorded only 5000 Khatris, although in the last century the community leaders had played a very significant role in the local administration of this area. In Kashmir too the Khatris were functionaries and officials of the State and some of the best administrators were Dagra Khatris.

In the Eastern districts of the Punjab, the Khatri population sometime was less than a thousand, it seldom exceeded even that figure. Thus, its strength in Hissar was 725, Rohtak 105, Gurgaon 208, Karnal 879, Simla 461. The position did not show much improvement even after twenty years in 1921 with the strength showing only a marginal increase in some place and a good rise in some other places. Thus at Hissar it rose to 885, Rohtak 355, Gurgaon 284, Karnal 1139 and Simla 917. In Ambala it declined from 7000 to 6843, and at Kangra from

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6392 to 5589. The rise and decline could be due to more births or deaths. Some immigratory or emigratory factors consequent to some natural catastrophies like famine and drought. Enterprise and an urge for finding better avenues could be another important factor for the rise in the Khatri population at one end. On the whole, there was a general increase in the Khatri population in Punjab, as pointed out earlier from 3,92,000 in 1891 to 5,16,000 in 1931. Besides Punjab, the Khatris were equally prominent in Native States of the Province totalling in all 35,000 in 1901 which increased to 39,000 in 1921. The break-up of the population in the Native States shows : Bilaspur 1300, Mandi 3200, Kapurthala 6800, Malerkotala 740, Faridkot 1600, Patiala 18,000, Nabha 4200, Chamba and Jind 1500, Simla Hill States 1500, and Bahwalpur 2100. There is no doubt a proportionate increase In the population in 1921 as under : Bilaspur 1400, Mandi 3200, Kapurthala 6900, Malerkotla 1450, Faridkot 1900, Patiala 15,000, Nabha 3200, Chamba 1900. The decline of the Khatri population in Nabha by a thousand might have been due to political and economic reasons. The movement of the Khatri population from West Punjab and Central Punjab as well as Jammu and Kashmir towards the Beas Jamna Doab was not very prominent. As the Khatris were either in trade or in administration, particularly in the revenue department, there was no need for any such exodus due to economic factors or even for political reasons in the British period. They seem to have stuck to their original homeland. In some individual cases people have to leave their native place on transfer or for religious disabilities. There have also been instances of certain social tensions and frictions compelling the Khatris in certain areus in South Punjab to move down in the south-western directions. This could be ascertained from a study of the Khatris in other Provinces during this period of study, particularly in the last decade of the 19th century and the beginning of the present one.

The study of the Khatris of the Punjab have engaged the attention of H.A. Rose (1902) and Ibbetson as well R.C. Temple. The former two have concentrated on the ethnographic study of the community while Temple confined his investigation to 'The Legends of the Punjab' 3 Vols. (1883-1901) and also published his 'Panjab Notes and Querries' a monthly

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periodical, 4 Vols. (Allahabad 1883/87). These are equally interesting from a sociological angle providing considerable information about the Khatris. The Gazetteers of different districts equally provide information on the position of the Khatris as also its numerous sub-castes or groups with reference to their specified areas. It is on the basis of the information furnished by the Gazetteer and the works quoted above that a detailed picture of the Khatris in Punjab and also their relations with the Aroras could emerge. According to Rose (Report H, Part I. p. 302f), the Khatris in Punjab, essentially a trading caste, few in agriculture, stand highest, with many bankers, and largely employed in civil administration. The distribution of the Khatri element, as pointed out earlier, is very well marked, strongest in the Central districts and in Rawalpindi, Jhelum, Gujrat, Shahpur and Hazare and occupying an important position in the western Hill States. They are less prominent in the southern districts of the western plains. The Aroras hold to the south-west, as the Banias to the south-east of the Punjab, tracts in which the Khatris are hardly to be found. On the other hand the Bhatias are found side by side with the Khatris in Sialkot, Gujrat and Shahpur and there is a strong Bhatia community in Multan. Relationship between the Khatris and Aroras is also traced by Campbell and Rose. The latter equally records the organization of the Khatris into different groups or sections—I. Bari constituting 12 exogamous sections, II. Bunjahi consisting of 52 sub-castes, III. Sarins. The Bari group includes Kapur, Khanna, Malhotra or Mehra, Kakkar or Seth, Chopra, Talwar, Sahgal, Dhawan or Dhaon, Wadhaun, Tannan, Bohra or Wohra and Mahendru. In Pindi Bahi or Wahi and Soni are added to make it to 14. This group is also said to contain four sub-groups based on the status of the family (not of the section). The *Bhunjahi*—52 sections have many sub-groups variously given, but the typical grouping according to Rose is : Khokharan, originally of 8 sections (*Athzatia* or *Ath-ghar)* and these sections in Rawalpindi are divided into 4 Thanas. Of these the first three form exogamous divisions. Inter-marriage is forbidden between the two sections in each thana because of *Sagotra*. To these 8 sections the *Chandok* has been affiliated in Peshawar. The Khokhrans are originally an offshoot of the Bhunjahis who are said to com-

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prise of two groups—the *Asli, Pakka* (real) and Hari—Bunjahi comprising 12 sections. The *Bara* or elder Bunjai comprise of 40 sections called Dharman or Dharmani. The *chota* or younger Bunjai have over 100 sections. This sub-group is called *Ansar* or *Sair* or *Bunjahi Khurd*. The Sarin forming a separate group are divided into 20 grades; each consisting of sections. The story of the emergence of Sarin as a separate group is traced to Ala-u-ddin Khilgi and his proposal for widow remarriage among the Khatris in 1216.

Rose as Census Superintendent in his Report further refers to territorial groups. The most ancient according to him is *Uchhandi* or Khatris of the uplands meaning north-west Punjab. Other groups are Multani, Peshawaris and Bharochi (from Bhera in Shahpur). None of these seems to be endogamous. The *Lahoria* and *Sirhindia* intermarry on equal terms. Rose also refers to two endogamous groups in Sialkot submountains—the *Jhukli* of the plains and the *Dogri* of the low hills, and in both of them the Bari and other social groups appear not to exist. In the south-east of Punjab there are two groups—the *Dilwala* (of Delhi) and *Agarwala* (of Agra) to which may be added the Purbia—the eastern one of the old North-west Province (later on U.P.). In the Agarwala, the Bari group seems to be non-existent but there are *Dhaighar, Charghar, Chharati* and *Khokharan* groups and below them the Bunjahi and Satin groups as in the Central districts. Of these the Sarins and Khokarans are strictly endogamous, but the others are hypergamous.

Endogamy allows marriage between persons who are recognised as being of the same blood-connection or kindred, thus confining marriage to the tribe or community. Hypergamy on the other hand permit marriage with one of equal or superior caste. On the basis of the account given by one Rai Bahadur Piare Lal of Delhi, Rose records among the Dhaighar and Charghar status : Seth, Kapoor, Mehra and Khanna. The Chhzati or six sections include: Bahl, Dhawan, Chopra, Sahgal, Talwar and Puri. The *Panjajati* i.e. five sections include Bahl, Beri, Sahgal, Wahi and Bij—strictly endogamous. The Dilwala Khatris in the list include Seth, Kapur, Mehra, Tandon, Kakkar and Bohra. Bedi and Sondhi are considered as sacred sections of the Dharman Bunjahi or Chota Sarin, and Tihun and Bhalla are placed in the Bara Sarin group.

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The Census records of 1881 also furnish some interesting details regarding the break up of the Khatris into different sub-castes or groups in different districts. Thus, for instance, the Bhunjayi or 52 sub-castes constitute the majority in Shahpur (6009), Peshawar (2728), Rawalpindi (10,195) and Sialkot (1850) districts followed by Charzati—four sub-castes 1268 in Shahpur and 1803 in Peshawar. Bhasins figure prominently in Rawalpindi (1208) while Malhotras dominate in Shahpur (4726). The Khokhrans are very strong in Shahpur (2810), Rawalpindi (7596) and Sialkot (4307). The Kapurs are conspicuous in Shahpur (903), Peshawar (743) and Rawalpindi (1429). The strength of Khannas recorded in Shahpur is 430 and in Rawalpindi 497. This break-up could provide an interesting study of the Khatri sub-castes and groups dominating in particular areas for specific reasons. In this context a fuller picture is provided by Ganesh Das in his book '*Char bagh*' which is actually a record of Khatri families and prominent personalities in early 19th century Punjab. Some of the Khatri families, according to this chronicle, are specially associated with certain districts or sub-divisions in the Punjab as Qanungo. This work should form part of a separate chapter on Punjabi Khatris in the Nineteenth Century.

Khatris in Pulkian States

According to the information provided in the Punjab State Gazetteers (Vol. XVII. A. 1904 pp. 70 ff), the Khatris in Patiala, Jind and Nabha States are mainly engaged in trade, but are largely employed in the State services. Some are land holders but not self-cultivators. The prominent sub-divisions are—Kapur, Khanna, Malhotra and Seth. The Sikhs number 1695. The main division of the Khatris is into Bunjahis and Sarins. The former have four main sub-divisions—*Dhaigha*, *Charghar*, *Bahri* and *Bunjahi*. There is a reference to the conference to the Bunjahis being organised at Patiala in 1874. The most important sub-castes—called *gots*—are the Seoni (Sahni), Matkan, Nanchapal, Tannon, Puri, Phandi, Budhawar, Duggal and Dhawan (all Bunjahis). The Khatris of Pail are an important body whose members own land or employed in the State. The Khatris of Sunam were Qanungo under the Mughals and held various posts under Akbar. Reference is also made to one

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Rai Saheb Lala Nanak Baksh Dhawn—the Indian guardian of the then Maharaja, and his son Lala Sohan Lal as Magistrate at Patiala. The Sarins are mainly represented by the Sodhis and Khosla gots of whom the former enjoyed extensive *muafi*—free-hold land as descendants of the Sikh Gurus. There are also references to Khatri customs associated with different sub-castes to which a reference would be made in detail in the chapter on 'Khatri Sub-castes—and their customary rites'. So also the role of the religious preachers and their shrines deserve fuller consideration separately. In the Patiala State the number of Khatris recorded is 18,138, out of these 4296 are said to be literate and those in English as well number 66.

U.P. Khatris

The Khatris of Uttar Pradesh, formerly United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, and still earlier in North-west province are noticed in Census operations. Those of 1872 with reference to the different divisions are: Meerut 8248, Robilkhand 6862, Agra 17,500, Jhansi 1597, Allahabad 22,583, Benaras 24,880 and Kumaon 8133. The Report of the Census of Oudh 1869, Vol. I; by Charles Williams (Page 92, para 93) put the figure of Khatris numbering 13,374. It also refers to a tradition regarding the dismissal of Khatris from military service in the time of Alamgir (Aurangzeb). They are generally traders and also agriculturalists. Reference is made to 4 Khatri Taluqdar owning landed estates. The Khatris are generally reckoned among the higher castes. Eliot, H.W., in his book on '*The Races of N.W. Provinces of India*', quotes figures of Khatri population in some districts in 1865 as under : Dehradun 281, Saharanpur 2849, Muzaffarnagar 767, Bulandsahr 2942, Aligarh 588, Bijnor 921, Moradabad 2448, Budaun 287, Bareilly 2300, Shahjanpur 1384, Muttra 1918, Etah 127, Fatehpur 491. Many more figures are missing. While the Khatris are found in all the districts, the great number 8457 is found in Cawnpore. In Saharanpur, the Khatris are said to have come from Peshawar and Multan in the Punjab in about 1500 A.D., while at Agra though scattered about the district, without any locality, they are said to have immigrated from Delhi. At Etawah, one Moti Lal Khatri is said to have come from Jalaun.

The Census figure for the Khatri population in U.P. is a

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detailed one, but, unlike the Punjab Reports, there is no break-up of the Khatri population in different districts nor is much information available about the role of the Khatris, some in stray cases. The districts showing more than a thousand Khatris are Meerut 1932, Saharanpur 1476, Aligarh 1421, Muttra 2845, Agra 3495, Farrukhabad 1721, Cawnpore 2548, Benaras 3814, Gorakhpur 1206, Lucknow 2891, Sitapur 1781, Faizabad 1038. Those having a strength of 500-1000 Khatris include the distiicts of Dehradun 474, Bulandsahr 870, Etawah 664. Banda 765, Mirzapur 703, Kheri 856, Bahraich 669 and Barabanki 572. The districts in which the Khatri population does not exceed 500 are Dehradun 474, Mainpuri 166, Etah 224, Fatehpur 480, Jalaun 233, Jaunpur, 297, Gazipur 490, Ballia 215, Azamgarh 230, Nainital 414, Unnao 396, Rae Bareli 131, Gonda 149, Sultanpur 177 and Rampur 499. A few districts, according to this Census, have less than a hundred Khatris. These are : Hamirpur 42, Basti 44, Pratapgarh 55, Almora 42, Garhwal 14 and Tehri Garhwal 10.

The Khatris at Kanpur with a few exceptions are described as wealthy, having acquired considerable landed property in Narwal and other places in the district. They constitute the Money Lending class as also commissariat contractors and land holders. A few such families are noted in the Gazetteer of the Cawnpore district, out of which the one of Gaya Prasad is prominent, and later on a big Public Library was also established in his name. So also in Allahabad there are references to prominent Khatris who owned business and are also land holders. The Banking business is monopolised by them and there is reference to the family of Gappoo Mal Kandhaiya Lal, dealers in cloth, tents and general contents. Manohar Das of this family monopolised the banking business as Treasurer of the Currency office, the Bank of Bengal and the Government Treasury, and acquired considerable landed property. One person Rai Ram Chandra Bahadur of this family was a Municipal Commissioner for 30 years. The Khatris numbering 2671 are said to belong with some exceptions to Allahabad and Phulpur and had also set up large estates in Handia and Surathu. There are references to a number of big Khatri landholders called Taluqdars, among them the Seths of Muizuddinpur village in Pargana Biswan, district Sitapur and those of

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Maurawan in Unnao district are very prominent. According to a traditional account as recorded in the family history, Jiwan Das son of Seth Ram Chandra, held a high command in the army of the Delhi emperors. He came from Delhi in 1790 with Sadat Ali Khan and received a grant of 137 villages. His son Dina Nath was appointed Nazim by the Nawab Wazir. Both in Lucknow and in Banaras, the Khatris owned large holdings and are reported to be flourishing in business as well. In Aligarh, the Khatris are said to own 7000 acres all of which lay in Atrauli. Reference is also made to cotton business in the hands of the Khatris and an important Khatri family owning a large steam factory employed 200 hands.

The few stray instances and traditional accounts connected with the Khatri families suggest that in some cases the migration of the Khatris to this Province was individual rather than commnnal or in groups though the latter possibility cannot be ruled out. It is suggested (p. 26) that the Khatris came to this district from Punjab about 700 years ago and trade is supposed to have brought them here. At Bulandsahr, one Raya Madho Ram Khatri in Sciendhia Service is said to have obtained by means of a Parwana dated 1196 Fasli, grant of the Jageer of Ahmedgarh together with its comparent village. In Etawah, Motamal Khatri and another Khatri of Jalaon settled down there about 400 years back and built a magnificent residence. Another Khatri family also took up residence there about 100 years ago.

Crooke in his study of 'Tribes and Castes of the North-West Province and Oudh' has made an interesting study of the community (Vol. III, p. 265) with reference to the traditional account of Parasu Ram's attempt at genocide of Kshatriyas, and their survival, as also the tradition of their dismissal from military service by Alamgir. The Lalloo-Jagdhar tradition and division into Barahghar, the consenting ones and *Charghar, Adhaighar* the dissendients to the scheme proposed by Alamgir, are also recorded by Crooke. He also notices the views of Campbell, Ibbetson, Nesfield and some others on the claim of the Khatris as Kshatris. These aspects have been considered earlier. Further, according to him, physic and general appearance show that the Khatris are of Aryan descent and once a higher race, they accepted a lower status on taking up mercan-

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tile occupations. The internal division of the Khatris is traced to the time of Ala-uddin, who attempted to impose widow remarriage upon the Khatris. In this context, the Western Khatris resolved to resist the innovation, and sent a deputation of 52 (*bawan*) of their members to represent their case in the Imperial Court, but the Eastern Khatris were afraid to sign the memorial. They were therefore called 'Shara-Aiyin' or the Mohammadan custom—hence Surin or Sareen. The Khokharan group is said to consist of the descendants of certain Khatris who joined the Khokar's rebellion and with whom the other Khatri families were afraid to inter-marry. Crooke also refers to another section among the Babris, of the lineage of Nahr Chand, Khand Chand and Kapur Chand in the Khatris who went to Delhi in attendance upon one of Akbar's Rajpur wives and who, thus separated from the rest of the caste married only within each other's families. He also mentions sub-divisions among the Mehrotras : Lalwane (Natkhol) and Kanauj ke Mehra; Tandons of three sub-divisions—Ranjit ka Tandon, Pihani ka Tandon and Billimar Tandon; and among the Kapurs : Kodokhane Kapur, and among Khannas—Nakshi Khanna. There was a well established rule of hypergamy.

The Khatris of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa

The Khatris of Bengal which in the last century comprised of Bihar and Orissa (finally separated to form a separate Province in 1911), according to Risley (*Tribes and Castes of Bengal* p. 482) trace their origin to the Punjab, and the main body of them is said to have emigrated from Lahore in the reign of Aurangzeb. These eastern or Purbiya Khatris in his words are spoken of in a somewhat slighting fashion by the Pachaiya Khatris of Upper India and are charged with having departed from the high standard of ceremonial party, supposed to be characteristic of the caste. The bulk of the Khatris in Bengal endeavour to conform on the whole to the traditional usages of the Punjab branch of the caste. They look to the Punjab as their original home, and in theory at least their social and domestic affairs are regulated by the standard set by the Khatris of Punjab. Most Khatris belong to the Vaishnava sect, but Siva worshippers are equally known. In East Bengal, Chandika, a form of Durga, is described as the patron deity of the caste,

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though each *gotra* has its own peculiar idol. It is said that when Raja Man Singh occupied Dacca with the Mughal army, there were a number of Khatris with him who settled down there. The Census of 1881 notices 2800 Khatris residing in Dacca. One Dr. Wise, quoted by Risley (p. 483) mentions the discovery of an im ge of Durga, being deposited in a shrine under the name of Dhakeshwari and even at that time regarded as the 'palladium of the city'. In his time the revenue of this sanctuary were divided between several old Khatri families and the Brahmachari Mahant of the Ramna Akhara. According to Risley, the majority of the Bengal Khatris are engaged in some form of trade. A few of them are reported to be Zemindars and tenure holders and a certain number are occupancy raiyats (peasants with tenancy rights). They never touch the plough themselves and employ hired labourers to cultivate their lands. The Maharaja of Burdwan is the head of the caste in Bengal. The status of the Khatris is placed in the superior rank, and all Brahmanas take water from their hands. The Sarasvat Brahmins eat Kachcha food prepared by them. Risley also furnishes the statement showing the number and distribution of the Khatris in 1872 and 1881. The higher figures are 13000 in Burdwan in 1872, followed by Tirhut which at that time included Muzaffarpur and Darbhanga, namely 4675 and Patna 1958, Nadia 1314, Dinajpur 1258. The corresponding figures for the Khatris in 1881 are Burdwan 5237, Tirhut 10618, Patna 1538, Nadia 597, Dinajpur 18634. A few districts show an abnormal rise in Khatri population with Bankura 4132 (earlier 497), Midnapur 3807 (1268), Hugli-Howrah 4863 (701), Dinajpur 18,934 (1258), Rangpur 1950 (118), Bogra 6,401 (717), Patna 1538 (1938), Dacca 2769 (621), Maiman Singh 2058 (941), Gaya 1863 (850). The decline in number and the corresponding rise in the Khatri population in some different districts could be due to economic factors resulting in the migration of population from areas hit by drought to less affected or richer ones, or from lesser economical and viable trade centres to more prosperous ones. There could have been instances of some class of people claiming the status of Khatris. Risley refers to one such case on the basis of the information provided by Dr. Wise of a class of Hindus at Paikapara in the Dacca district calling themselves as Randa or Randak Khatris.

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The history of Burdwan Raj seems to mark the beginning of Khatri migration or its efflorescence of the Khatris in Bengal. It was in 1657 that Abu Rai, a Kapur Khatri of Kotli in Lahore who had migrated to Burdwan was appointed the Fauzdar of Chakla Burdwan. In 1696 there was a rebellion led by one Sobha Singh who killed the Burdwan Khatri Chakladhar but was in turn killed by the Rajkumari—the legal princess. In 1741 the title of Raja was conferred on Chitra Sen Rai. The best known representative of the family was Kirti Chander (1702-40) who extended his principality to include the petty kingdom of Chandra Kona and Bandaner Ghatal in the Midnapur. Tilokchand (1744-71) of the Burdwan family was vested with the title of Maharajadhiraja Bahadur. The last head of the Raj in the nineteenth century Maharaja Aftab Chand died issueless in 1885 and his widow adopted Bijoy Chand, son of Raja Bana Behari Kapoor, who later acted as the guardian during his son's minority. Finally in 1905 Maharajadhiraja Bijoy Chand Bahadur was installed on the Gaddi. Raja Ban Behari Kapoor played the leading part as President of the All-India Khatri Sammelan at Bareilly in 1901. It was due to his efforts that the mistake done by Risley, Burns and others in regarding the Khatris to the third group in the social hierarchy was rectified.

In Bihar the important districts and towns connected with the Khatri families are those of Muzaffarpur and Darbhanga, constituting the Tirhut Division, Bhagalpur, Patna and Hazaribagh districts. Darbhanga records a consistent Khatri population of 4260 (1891), 3769 (1901) and 3008 (1911), but in Bhagalpur there is at first a marginal rise followed by a sharp decline : 12,507 (1891) to 12948 (1901) and 1175 (1911)—an explicable feature. But in Muzaffarpur there is a rise from 150 (1891), 1160 (1901) and 1727 (1911). In Patna the Khatri population between these thirty years shows a fall, followed by some improvement, 1579 (1891), 1173 (1901) and 1244 (1911). These places had earlier clusters of Khatri population. In the Chota Nagpur belt a sizeable Khatri population is recorded in the Hazaribagh district as well. The rise and fall of the Khatri population as also their clustering in certain areas of Bihar seems to be the result of certain economic factors. Incidentally, in Bihar there are two sets of Khatris—those connected with

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land—as holders or proprietors and those with land occupancy rights alone and traders. The former class seems to have migrated from the Punjab in some administrative capacity. There must have been instances of successful Khatri business men purchasing of Zemindari rights in a system which ensured permanency. The Khatri land tillers could have been the retainers of those landholders who gave them occupancy rights.

In Orissa the Khatris are placed above others claiming Kshatriya status. A substantial Khatri population is recorded in Cuttak 7000 (1891), 6426 (1901) and 4814 (1911) and so also in Puri 2110 (1911), earlier only 154. In the whole of Orissa the recorded Khatri popu!ation shows an increase in thirty years: 7845 (1891), 11707 (1901) and 12540 (1911). According to Risley, there are several high class Khatri families in Puri, including one of the Raja of Puri who is a lineal descendant of the last Hindu King of Orissa and as trustee of the great temple of Jagannath is commonly called Thakur Raja. Elsewhere the Khatris, in the words of Risley, look better than the Rajputs and more respectable chiefs claim to be of this caste.

Khatris in the Old Bombay Presidency

The Khatris in the Bombay Presidency are distinguished from their brethern in the North by habits, customs, language and profession. The surnames are missing. At best, they call themselves Khatris. The Bombay Gazetteers record their presence in several districts: Kolaba (Vol. XI. 1883 p. 64), Thana (Vol. XIII. Pt. I. p. 133), Poona (Vol. XVIII. Pt. I. 1885), Sholapur (Vol. XX. 1884 pp. 118-119); Kolhapur (Vol. XXIV p. 95); Dharwar (Vol. XXII. pp. 170-71). There are also references to Brahma-Kshatris—a rich class owning land and house property, with many members of this caste in Government services holding office of trust and responsibility (BG. IV. Ahmadnagar. 1875 p. 35). The Khatris at Kolaba, found only in Alibag, claim Kshatriya descent and state that they were settled in Chaul, as silk weavers but left the place and migrated to Revsanda on account of a pestilence. Most of them later returned to Alibag. The men are described as short and spare, fair and small-eyed. The women are fair and short. They speak Marathi and also dress like Maratha Brahmanas. They were formerly silk weavers and dyers and dealers in gold, silver and

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silk lace. Every family has one or two looms in working order but they don't depend on weaving for their living. Their favourite household goddesses are Ashapuri, Mahalakshmi and Bhawani and the god Khandoba. Their priests are the Brahmin ones, the social disputes are settled by their headman or *mukadam* with the help of men of caste. As a class the Khatris are described as well-to-do and free from debt. They send their boys to school and are prosperous and rising.

The Thana district Gazetteer notices Khatri numbering 41, found in Murbad, Salsette, Bhinwade, Pannel and Kalyan. Their common surnames are Takle, Roda, Mungla, Kolvi. They speak Marathi and like the Khatris of Kolaba, they are non-vegetarians. They make gold and silver lace and silk waist clothes, pitambaras. They also do pawn broking taking gold and silver ornaments and clothes in pledge. They wear sacred thread and marry their girls before puberty and boys between 12-15. There is no widow remarriage Breach of caste rules involves excommunication. Their locality in Thana is called *Khatriavada* (BG. XIV. p. 346).

The Khatris in Ahmadnagar (Vol. XVIII. 1884. pp. 109-112) claim their original homeland in Mandogara—the old capital of Malwa. After slaughter by Parasurama, they were advised by Devi to take to weaving. The names in common use among them are Alisa, Balasa, Bapusa, Damasa, Govindasa, Mannasa, Narayansa, Ramusa and Vishnusa and among women Durga, Ganga, Gopika and Radha. Men add *Savanji* (chief) and women *Bai* (lady) to their names. Their surnames are Baji, Bakhara, Borgaukar, Chingi, Khade, Khambe, Khanapure, Kherulkar, Magaji, Parar, Panchang etc. Persons belonging to the same surname don't marry. They include three sub-divisions: Brahma Khatris, Kapur Khatris and Sahaisvajun Khatris who neither eat together nor inter-marry. Most Ahmednagar Khatris belong to the first group of Brahma-Khatris. As a class they are described as dark, strong and well-made and their speech is a mixture of Marathi and Gujrati. They are non-vegetarians, but equally religious and refrain from animal food and liquor in the months of Sravana and seventh of Ashvin (July—September) for nine weeks. Men wear waist cloth, a shoulder cloth, a coat and turban and put on a pair of shoes or sandals. Women put on *mangala sutra* and toe-rings and ver-

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millon. As a class the Khatris are described as clean, humble and honest, hard working but somewhat extravagant. The rich work both as weavers and money lenders. All the Maratha Khatris rank below Brahmins. Devi, their family goddess, is in special reverence, worshipped in the house with flowers and laying sandal paste every day. Their priests known as Khatri-bhat belong to their own caste and conduct their birth, thread-giving, marriage, puberty and death ceremonies. They go on pilgrimage to Benaras, Jejuni in Poona and Pandarpur in Sholapur. They also worship all village and boundary gods. They have a caste Council and settle social disputes at caste meetings under their headman or Chaudhari whose office is hereditary located at Aurangabad. They send their boys to school.

The Khatris in the whole of the Poona district number 460 (BG. XVIII. Pt. I. 1885). According to the tradition, after the genocide attempt by Parasurama, their goddess asked them to assume the name of Khatris and to take to weaving. The time of their immigration to the district is not recorded. Divided into three groups—Somavanshis, Surtis and Suryavanshis—who don't eat together or intermarry. The surnames of the first group are Chauhan, Gopal, Jhare, Khode, Khosandar, Povar and Vahnekar. Their leading family stocks or gotras are Bharaduaja, Jamadagni, Narada, Parashar, Valmiki and Vasishtha. There is no *Sagotra* marriage.

In Sholapur, the number of Khatris recorded are 1174 (BG. XX. 1884 pp. 118-119), found in all the sub-divisions. They came here from Chaul in Kolaba about a hundred years ago (about 1780 or so). The men are short and fair and small eyed. Women are fair and short. Their mother tongue appears to be Marathi but they speak a mixture of Kanarese, Gujarati and Hindustani. Both men and women dress like Maratha Brahmins They are cotton and silk weavers, dyers and dealers in gold, silver and silk. They worship the ordinary Hindu gods and goddesses, their favourite ones being Khandoba and Renuka. Their priests are ordinary Brahmins. They have sacred thread before sixteen, and marry the sons before 25 and daughters before puberty. Social disputes are settled by a meeting of elderly caste men in the presence of their Brahmin priests. The Khatris are also included among the six weavers

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classes in Kolhapur (BG. XXIV. p. 95).

The Khatri population in Dharwar numbers 4060 (BG. XXII. pp. 170-71), which includes those in Gadg and Karajgi. They claim descent from the seven sages—Bharadvaja, Jamadagni, Kasyapa, Katyayana, Valmiki and Vasishtha. Their speech at home is a mixture of Marathi, Hindustani and Kanarese while outside it is Kanarese. Their family gods are Ganapati and Mahadevi. They are fair, tall strong and muscular and non-vegetarians. Their main calling is weaving cotton, silk and dyeing silk. They are religious and their ceremonies are conducted by Brahmin priests. They make pilgrimage to Ambabai at Tulyapar in Satara. Their spiritual teacher is Sankaracharya. There are also references to *namakarana*—naming ceremony and sacred thread is given at the age of 8. The Khatris are fair, tall, strong and muscular and are non-vegetarian and are equally fond of drinks. They are bound together by a strong caste feeling and persons are outcasted for flouting caste rules and discipline. Social disputes are settled by a majority of the caste men. As in other districts, the children are sent to school to take to new pursuits and are a steady class.

The Khatris in Old Central Provinces and Berar

Russel in his '*Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India*' (p. 456 ff) describes the Khatri as a prominent mercantile caste of the Punjab, whose members to the number of about 5000 have settled in the Central Provinces and Berar, being distributed over many districts. Discussing the claim of the Khatris to be original Kshatriyas, he quotes Herbert Risley's approval of their demand on the evidence laid before him by the leading representatives of the caste, and its acceptance by Crooke and Nesfield. Reference is also made to the Parasuram tradition and the association of the Saraswat Brahmins with the Khatris as their priests. Equally conspicuous is the account provided by George Campbell on the Khatris in his *Ethnology of India*. In his reference to this community in the Province under review, Russel refers to a very complicated system of sub-divisions among the Khatris despite their small number. As a rule they practise monogamy with provision for a second wife only in the absence of any progeny. The remarriage of widows is forbidden and divorce is not recognised. Russel also distin-

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guishes the Khatris from the Brahma Kshatris who are hereditary district officials, pleaders, bankers and Government servants. The Khatris on the other hand, are engaged in weaving, and formally prepared the fine cotton cloth of Surat and Broach, as also make gold and silver thread and the lace used for embroidery. The Khatris of Nimar in the Central Provinces are also weavers, and it seems not unlikely that they may be a branch of these Gujarat Khatris, and the well known gold and silver lace and embroidery industry of Burhanpur may have been introduced by them from Surat. The Khatris of Narsinghpur are dyers, and may not improbably be connected with the Niwar weavers. The other Khatris scattered here and there over the Provinces are said to be of the higher branch of the caste.

The Brahma-Kshatriyas of Gujarat, Bombay and Central Provinces

The Brahma-Kshatriyas, according to Campbell (*Ethnology* pp. 112-113), represent a cognate tribe of the Kshatris of the Kabul country, rougher and more war like, who may have come and ruled as a military caste. They are called Khakka Kshatris like that of Punjab. Though engaged in peaceful professions the Brahma Kshatriyas have not lost their martial spirit akin to that of Punjab in their customs as well. Described as handsome, fair skin and with blue or grey eyes, large and vigorous, they dress like high class Gujarati Hindus. They speak Gujarati with few Hindustani words. Traditional accounts suggest that they emigrated from the Punjab and settled at Champaner in the Panch Mahal. On the capture of that place by Mahmud Beg (A.D. 1484) they moved to Ahmedabad and occupied the quarter of the city at present known by the name of Khadiya. The Muslim oppression compelled them to migrate to other parts. Some went as far as Hyderabad in Deccan. Some went to Benaras and Lucknow and are known as Gujarati Kshatris (Campbell's Report of 1865 Census of N.W. Province).

In the Bombay Presidency the Brahma-Kshatris are found in Kaira (BG. III. 1879 p. 30), Panchmahal (Vol. III. 1879 p. 216) and Poona (XVIII. Pt. I. 1885 pp. 266) districts. Those at Kaira are the descendants of one family who as hereditary district officers hold an estate in the village of Alina in the

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Nadiabad sub-division. The younger branch of the family have from time to time left Alina in search of a livelihood. Despite their settling down in different parts of the district the connection with the family at home is not snapped. Numbering only 27 in Panch Mahal, the Brahma Kshatris are employed in Government offices. They are supposed to be new comers residing only temporarily as they keep up houses in Broach and other parts of Gujarat. In Poona city the caste members number only 63 and are said to have come there from Aurangabad about 60 years ago from 1885 when recorded. They are also called Thakurs. Their family status or gotras are Bharadvaja and Kausika. They are fair and speak Marathi, also vegetarian and teetotaller. They are bankers, money changers, moneylenders, railway contractors, writers, cloth dealers and husbandsmen. They are religious and worship chiefly Mahadeo and Devi of Sapta Strungi hill, 30 miles north of Nasik. Elsewhere the Brahma Kshatriyas have a *Kuladevi*, except in Kathiawar where the land-holding Kshatriyas are Vaishnavas of the Vallabhacharya sect, their favourite object of public worship are Siva and Sakti. The customs of these Brahma-Kshatriyas closely resemble those of the Khatris of Northern India—such as *mundan*—tousure followed by Devakaja in that, sacred thread and marriage ceremonies etc. which would necessitate fuller treatment in a separate chapter on Khatri customs and rites under the broad head 'Society and Religion'.

The strength of the Khatris in different avocations is provided by Baines (op. cit. pp. 146-47). He notices Khatris under three heads: Traders numbering 585,000; writers 138,000, and weavers 56,200. The last class is confined only to Gujarat, Bombay and Central Provinces. The other two classes of Khatris are to be found practically in all the regions. The change over to another profession is not an unusual feature. Socio-religious as well as politico-economic factors have much to play in the change over from one profession to another. There are instances of Brahmins being ostracised and compelled to follow the profession of dyers. Vocational mobility, as such, is quite a normal phenomenon. Baines in his caste index to his work on *Ethnography* places Khatris in Punjab in the list of traders, those of the Ganges valley as writers, and those of West (Western India) as weavers. The *Gaddis* in the Kangra

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valley, in former Punjab (now in Himachal Pradesh) claim the status of Khatris even though they breed sheep and take them out for grazing, a profession unconnected with the Khatris of the North.

Khatris of Southern India

The Khatris of Conjeeveram where most of them trade in silk thread, silk sashes and dye-stuffs, are called Patnulkaram by other castes. The Khatris, according to Lewis Rice as 'silk weavers', resemble Patvega in manners, customs and language, but have no inter-marital relations with them. The Khatris claim to be Kshatriyas and quote *Renuka Purana* as their authority. According to the legendary account, during the great massacre of the Kshatriyas by Parasu Ram, five women, each of whom was big with child escaped, and took refuge in a temple dedicated to Kali. When the children came of age, the goddess in answer to their supplication gave them looms and taught them weaving and dyeing. The Khatris, according to Thurston (*Castes and Tribes of Southern India* pp. 282 ff) give Bhuja Raja Kshatriya as their caste name and some equally claim their descent from one Kartavira Arjuna. Their tribal deity is Renukamba, the mother of Parasurama. They have exogamous sects, such as Sulegar, Pavai, Mudugal, Surappa, Bajagiri etc. and have Brahmanical gotras, such as Gautama, Kasyapa, Vasistha and Bharaduaja. The genealogy of the Khatri families are kept by Bhats. Girls are married before and even after puberty and the remarriage of widows is permitted but not with his husband's brother or an agnate. The custom of *menarikam* by which a man may marry his maternal uncle's daughter is prohibited. Families of one sect could give their daughters in marriage to men of another sect from whom they need not claim girls as wives for their sons. The headmen of the Khatris called *Gramani*—is elected once a month and is assisted by an assistant called *Vanja* elected annually. The Khatris are Saivites and wear the sacred thread, but also worship various grama devatas—village deities. They speak a dialect of Marathi.

There is also reference to another class of Khatris called 'Kethree' in the *Vizagapatnam Manual* as the caste of the Zemindar family in Jeypore. It is divided into sixteen classes.

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They wear the *paieta* (sacred thread). There is as well as a notice of the Khatri agriculturists of the Jeypore Agency tracts, quite different from the weaving Khatris of the south. They are divided into four sects, viz. Surya (Sun), Bhag (tiger), Kochchiuao (tortoise) and Nag (Cobra). They marry their girls before puberty and an Oriya Brahman officiates at their marriages. The marriage ceremonies are performed at the bride's place. The Khatris put on sacred thread for the first time when they are married. They are fair skinned and speak the Oriya language.

A historical reference to the Khatris in the South could be traced as early as A.D. 1360. In May or June that year, in the war with Warangal, the Hindu bankers and money changers in all towns of the kingdom were by royal order put to death. Their place was taken up by the Hindus of the Khatri caste of Northern India who had accompanied the various armies which had invaded the Deccan, and now enjoyed a monopoly of the business of banking and money changing. In the reign of Ferozshah Bahmani (1374-1422) the descendants of the slaughtered men were permitted on payment of a large sum of money to resume their business (*Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III, p. 378).

The Musalman Khatris

The Census Report of 1901 (p. 289) records 11,751 Muslim Khatris—5,842 Male and 5909 Female. These include those in Punjab and in other parts of the country. The Musalman Khatris of Cutch are specially noted in the Bombay Gazetteer of the district (Vol. V. p. 94). It refers to a few Musalman families found in different parts of Cutch. They are said to have come from Sind about the middle of the 16th century (1554) and adopted Islam because of some dispute with the priests—the Brahmans of the Sarasvat caste. The men shave the head and wear the beard and dress like the other Musalmans of Cutch. They are fair with flat faces, long ears and high prominent foreheads. Generally they are hard working honest people, sober, thrifty and orderly. They work as dyers, carpenters, turners and cultivators, and their women are skilled in embroidery and frilling. They are well-to-do Sunnis in faith, deeply religious in outlook and marry among themselves. They form a

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distinct community, settling disputes by persons chosen for the purpose. Hindu Khatris wishing to join them are sometimes admitted. They are described as conservatives and not taking to new pursuits. The Khojas, Menons and Bohras are also supposed to be converts to Islam. These immigrants from Sind in the past included Khatris and such others of the trading class leaving their home for certain socio-religious constraints. It is interesting to trace a reference to the mosque and tomb of one Sheikh Ahmad Khattri at Sankhej (Gujarat) dated in the year 1446. (*Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III. p. 611).

The Musalman Khatris in Punjab are known as Khojas. According to Ibbetson (Op. cit. p. 248), some 2600 Khatris are Musalmans chiefly in Multan and Jhang where they are commonly known as Khojas, and these men are said to belong chiefly to the Kapur section. The Khojas of Shahpur are almost entirely Khatris, while those of Jhangare said to be converted Aroras (ibid p. 252). Another term Parcha is used for the Mohammadan pedlar. The parachas of the Salt Range Tract have their headquarters at Mukhad in Pindi, and there are also large colonies at Attak and Peshawar whence they carry on an extensive trade with cities of Central Asia, chiefly in cloth, silk, indigo and tea. It is reported that they moved to Mulkhand in Shahjahan's time, but according to another account they were Khatris of Lahore, deported by Zaman Shah. They give their daughters only to Parachas, though they occasionally take wives of foreign origin. The Hindu title of Raja continues to be retained by them.

Sikhs and other Khatris

The history of the Sikhs is in fact the history of the Gurus from Guru Nanak to Guru Govind Singh. The founder Guru Nanak was a Bedi Khatri of Talwandi (now Nankana Sahib) in the Lahore district. His successor Guru Angad was a Tihun Khatri whose original name was Lahna. Guru Amar Das (1552-1574) was a Bhalla Khatri. Guru Ram Das (1574-1581), the founder of the Har Mandir or Golden Temple, belonged to the Sodhi clan of Khatris. Guru Govind Singh, the last Guru, traces his descent and that of Guru Nanak in Chapters II-V of his Grantha, *Bichara Natak* from Lava and Kusha respectively —the two sons of Rama of the Epic fame. It would be in the

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fitness of things to write a comprehensive history of the Sikh Khatri Gurus and their contribution to Indian political and socio-religious ethos in the Mughal period in a separate chapter, along with references to several other religious teachers. The Khatri Sikh population as recorded in 1901 Census (Vol. IA. p. 292) is 60,685 out of a total of 1,030,078 Khatris. There are references to 704 Jain and 27 Buddhist Khatris in this Census.

Summing-Up

In a general survey of the basis of the cut-off period (1891-1901) Census reports, the break up of the Khatri population in different districts of Punjab and the North-West Frontier, then constituting one Province, has been recorded. It shows that they form 4 per cent of the total population in the western districts, particularly Jhelum and Rawalpindi. This ratio dwindles down as they proceed eastwards coming down to between 3-4% in the Shahpur, Gujrat, Jhang, Gujranwala, Lahore and Amritsar; and between 2-3% in Gurdaspur, Kapurthala, Jullandhar and Hoshiarpur. In other districts it is under 2%. The south-west part of Punjab has the upper hand of the Aroras whose strength exceeds that of the Khatris. The relationship between the Khatris and the Aroras is one based on geographical factors. According to Baines (op. cit. p. 34), the Aroras, closely allied to the Khatris, occupy decidely an interior social position. They started from nearly the same region as the others, but do not appear to have pushed their way into the fertile tracts of the north, but to have remained on the less remunerative plains along the Indus. A closer study of the customs and traditions of the two communities alone could provide an index to their affinity.

The movement of the Khatris from Punjab towards the east and south-westerly directions was the result of several factors—individual as well as group, including political, as also socio-economic ones. To some extent administrative considerations and military directives were also responsible for the emigration of Khatris in different periods. There are also instances of groups of Khatris moving out in block due to certain other considerations like confrontation with the conservative forces. An analysis of the Khatri population in the old North-west

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Province and Oudh (now the State of Uttar Pradesh—U.P.) as also the old Bengal Presidency which before 1911 included Bihar and Orissa as well, reveals several interesting features regarding the immigration of Khatris in the new areas in an enterprising manner for trade and commerce. There have been instances of Khatri officials, civil and military, accompanying expeditions and their settling down in the land of their adoption. The grant of fiefs or the accumulation of land and property added to their prosperity and equally provided incentives for their kins folk to join them, thus raising the strength of new Khatri emigrants there. The Khatri population equally filled the vacuum in the economic life of the areas devasted by the armies from the north. These cumulative factors account for the dispersal of the Khatri population in different parts of the country.

A notable feature in the life style of the Khatris in different regions is the retention of their traditional customs. They no doubt accepted the language as also the dress of the people in their new settlements and in the south and south-west they even took local surnames, but were firm in worshipping their family goddess and equally retained their *Sanskaras*—like the sacred thread and other ceremonies and their vedic gotras. The marital relations are as well confined within the community. Even Khatris converted to Islam and named Khojas and Bauras, stuck to their family traditions and married only among the members of their group, welcoming of course those Hindu Khatris who were willing to join their fold. A fuller study of the Khatris of Northern India and other parts of the country within the socio-logical framework may next be taken up before switching over to the role of the Khatris in Medieval and Modern India.

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CHAPTER 3

Khatri Society and Religion

The Khatri society as a part of the Indian caste system presents an extraordinarily complex social phenomenon. The close interlocking of religious and secular features no doubt provide an interesting study of this caste. Its hierarchial set up with particular reference to what is called social stratifications —*dhai*, *char*, *barah* and *bawan* or *bunjahi*—and stress on exogamous marital relationship demand scrutiny and closer attention. Social scientists have no doubt been interested in such stratifications in Khatri society without being able to provide a clear-cut explanation for these divisions. According to Ibbetson, the origin of the term '*dhai-ghar*' lies in the fact that the families of that division, while contracting marriages, have as a rule to exclude not only the father's clan but also such families of the mother's clan as are closely connected with her, and thus reduce the number of clans available for marriage (from four) to two and a half. This explanation does not provide an answer to the other groupings: *Charghar*, *barah ghar*. It is no doubt evident that the *dhai ghars* generally confine the marriage of their daughters to only two and a half sections out of the four into which they are sub-divided, but girls could be taken from the other clans.

Legendary accounts however trace this division of the Khatris into different groups or clans to the time of Alauddin Khilji when a proposal was officially mooted out for remarriage of Khatri widows. A large number of Khatri soldiers had died in the Deccan campaign of the Sultan. The Khatri diwan Udharman was summoned for this purpose who, in turn, called the Chaudharis of the caste—Lallu and Jagdhar for this purpose. The two Chaudharies placed the proposal before the Khatri Panchayat but it was not acceptable to the people who

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openly denounced Udarmal's proposal. 'Fie down with Lallu Jagdhar' were the words which eventually prevented the groups to come together. The first to raise this protest consisted of Mehra, Kapur and Khanna families, followed by another band consisting of members of the twelve classes—Tandon or Tannan, Khakker, Talwar, Dhaon, Bahl, Mahendra, Budhwar, Buhara, Vij, Sahgal or Saigal, Chopra and Tani. These were later on followed by a fresh move of 52 sub-sections. The precedence taken by the Khatri groups in raising their protests was deemed the basis of their placement in the social hierarchy. There was also a silent section which was dubbed as conformist to the Muslim law—the *Shar-i-Ain*—later on changed to Sarin. The Khatris in general protesting over provision for widow remarriage are reported to have been removed from the army and relegated to the status of brokers in commercial and trade deals. (*Ashraf-ul-Tarikh*—quoted in Sardar Bahadur Amin chand's *Tawarikh-l-Qaum Kshatriyan* p. 21 and also by Moti Lal Seth—*op. cit.* p. 175). This account does lack historical veracity and seems incredible, because the Khatris continued to be in the army in later times as well. Raja Todarmal, a Tandon Khatri, was not merely an efficient diwan but had equally distinguished himself at the war fronts—with his valour and military insight in the time of Akbar. Moreover, such a classified system of social hierarchical system could not have been evolved by a solitary instance or event, and that too in a localised form. The domestic group called the *ghara* (household or *Chulah* (hearth group) is also traced among the Kashmiri Pandits (Madan: *Family and Kinship* p. 27). The explanation for this division therefore need be sought elsewhere.

The gradations of the Khatris seem to be based both on sociological and geographical factors. The Khatris in the North are placed broadly into several groups. The first group includes the Dilwalis, the Lahoria, Chahjatis, the Agarwala Charjati, the Panjajatis, the Chhaijatis, the Barahjatis, the Bawanjatis or Bawanjais or Banjaiskalan, the Bohjatis or the Baiyars Khurd, the Purbias or Pawadhe i.e. the Purwardhe or the eastern and the pachhaiyans or pachhadhe—the western half. The second group, according to this classification, consists of the *Bare Sarin*, and the *Chote Sarin*. The Khukran Khatris form the third group, followed by the Brahma Khatris or the Gujrati

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ones forming a separate group. The Sikhara Khatris, the Peshawariya Khatris and those living outside India are considered as separate groups. (Moti Lal: op. cit. 181, 184).

'The internal structure of the Khatris', in the words of Risley (op. cit. p. 480), 'in terms of endogamous divisions is extremely obscure and complicated'. He quotes Ibbetson that 'within recent times there has sprung up a system of social gradations in accordance with which certain Khatri tribes refuse to intermarry with any save a certain specified number of their fellow tribes, and the distinctions thus created have been formulated in a set of names such as *Arhaighar*, he who only marries into two and a half houses; *Charzati*—'he who marries into four tribes'; *Chhazati*—'he who marries into six tribes' and so on. This purely artificial and social classification has obscured the original divisions of the caste; for Khatris of the same may be in one part of the province *Charzatis*, and in another *Barazatis* and so forth. Ibbetson provides the following abstract in describing the Khatris of the Punjab:

Bunjahi	Tribal Groups
Sarin	
Bahri	
Khokaran	
Arhaighar	Artificial division
Charzati	
Panjati	
Chhezati	
Sodhi	Exogamous Section
Bedi	
Kapur	
Khanna	
Marhotra	
Seth	

The origin of the division into four sections called Bunjahi, Sarin, Bahri and Khokran is said to be that of Ala-ud-din Khilji attempted to impose widow remarriage upon Khatris. The Western Khatris resolved to resist the innovation, and

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sent a deputation of 52 (bawan) of their members to represent their case at court, but the Eastern Khatris were afraid to sign the memorial. They were therefore called followers of *Shara-Ayin* or the Mohamedan customs—hence Sarin; While the memorialists were called Bawanjati, from the number of the deputation or of the clans respectively represented by the members of the deputation—hence Bunjahi. The Khokhran section is said to consist of the descendants of certain Khatris who joined the Khokhars in rebellion, and with whom the other Khatri families were afraid to have marital relations. The Bahri section of the lineage of Mahr Chand, Khan Chand and Kapur Chand represented three Khatris who went to Delhi in attendance upon one of Akbar's Rajput wives, and who thus separated from the rest of the caste married only within each other families. But as pointed out earlier, there are more fables, for the same division into Bahri and Bunjahi appears among the Brahmans of the western plains. The most important in point of social rank, according to Ibbetson, are the Marhotra or Mehra, the Khanna, the Kapur and the Seth, the first three of which are said to be called after the names of the three men mentioned above. Seth is a term used for any rich banker.

Rose in his Report on 'the Khatris of Punjab and N.W. Frontier Province' Part I, 1902, also refers to the organization of the Khatris into 3 groups—the *Bari*, the *Bunjahi* and the *Sarin*. The first group called the Bari, according to him, has 12 exogamous sections, the second ones, four in number—being Kapur, Khanna, Mahrotra or Mehra and Kakka or Seth. The 8 junior sections include Chopra, Talwar, Sahgal, Dhawan, Wadhaun, Tannan, Bohra or Wohra and Mahendru. These are classed into *dhaighar*, Charghar, Chhaghar and Baraghara or Barazati. In Pundight, Gadhoki, Bahi, Wahi and Soni, figure in instead of 9 and 12 (viz. Wadhaun and Mahendra), thus making 14. It contains four sub-groups based on the status of the families (not of section) in each (*ibid.* p. 341 ff).

The Bunjahi constituting 52 sections have many more than the first group. The sub-groups are variously given, but the typical groupings, according to Rose, are as following: (*i*) Khokharan—originally of 8 sections—hence known as Athi-Zatia or Athi-ghar and these sections are in Rawalpindi divided into 4 thanas. Of these the first three form exogamous division;

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inter-marriage being forbidden between the two sections in each thana because of *sagotra*. These four thanas, each consisting of two sub-castes are I—consisting of Anand and Bhasin, II—consisting of Chadha and Sahni, III—Suri and Sethi, and IV—Kohli and Sabherwal. The Khokharans are originally an offshoot of the Bunjahi group and in one locality take wives from other Bunjahis, but they are as a rule endogamous and form a sub-caste of their own. The Bunjahis constitute two groups of *Khas, Ash* and *Pakka*– real, and *Bara*. The former comprises 12 sections, while Bara or elder Bunjahi has 40 sections called Dharman or Dharmani. The younger Bunjahi forming another sub-group has over 100 sections. This sub-group is called Ansar or Sair or *Bunjahi-Khurd* or an. The Sarins are also grouped into two—Bara or elder Sarin with 10 sections and Chota or junior also with 10 sections.

Besides these divisions of Khatris, Rose refers to territorial groups—the most ancient one called *Uchhande* or Khatris of the uplands—meaning north-west Punjab. The others are Multani, Peshawarian and Bharochi (of Bhera in Shahpur). None of these seem to be endogamous. The *Lahoria* and *Sirhindia* intermarry on equal terms. In the Sialkot sub-mountainous region there are two endogamous groups—the *Jhikli* of the plains and 'the Dogri' of the low hills and in both of these the Bari and other social groups appear to be absent.

In the south-east of the Punjab there are two groups—the Dilwalia (of Delhi) and Agrawala (of Agra) to which may be added the Purbia (North-west Province—U.P.). In the Agra-wala group the Bari group does not appear to exist, but there are *Dhaighar, Charghar, Chhazati* and *Khokharan* groups, and below them the Bunjahi and Sarin groups as in the Central districts. Of these the Sarins and Khokharan are strictly endogamous but the others are hypergamous—those who could marry outside their group. The territorial groups are supposed to be nebulous. The Dhaighar and Charghar status sub-castes in this region are—Seth, Kapur, Mehra and Khanna, followed by the six Chhazati—namely Bahl, Dhaon, Chopra, Sahgal, Talwar and Puri. The Panjazati or five sections include Bahl, Sahgal, Big (Wig), Beri and Wahi who are strictly endogamous.

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The Dilwalis

The Dilwali Khatris are so called because of their residence in the Delhi or Dilhi area. Some however trace their origin to a place called Dilwal in the Punjab and refer to the rites and ceremonies of the Khatris of Shahpur and Khushal in the Trans-Jhelum region being closer to theirs. Moti Lal Seth refers (p. 183) to some original documents in which the term Dilwali seems to have existed as early, at least, as the 15th century A.D. The Pandas of the Soron-Ganga have the oldest record of the Dilwali Khatri pilgrims in Persian character dated in the Vikrama Samvat 1546=A.D. 1489. The Dilwalis comprise seven sections Mehra, Kapur, Seth, Tandon, Kakkar, Seth and Mahendra.

The Lahoria Khatris

The Chahzati Lahoria Khatris are divided into *dhaighar*, *charghar* and *barah ghar*, and each of these three divisions consists of the same four sections, Mehra, Kapur, Khanna and Seth. Hence the name *Charjatis* appears. These people consider themselves to be the highest order Khatris and do not marry their girls outside their own circle, but have no objection to taking wives from Khatris of other groups—even the Agrawalas and Bawanjais. Such rules based on conventions are arbitrary. One of the branch of the Lahoria Charzatis is the *Siraindhis* or *Sarhindis* at Agra who gives their daughter in marriage to other local Khatris as well.

The Agrawala Charzati

This territorial name signifies Khatris in and near Agra. They are divided into *dhaighars*, *charghars* and *barahghar*, and each of the three divisions also include the same four sections like those of the Lahorias. The Tandons replace the Seths in these groups. The daughters of the Agrawal Khatris go to the Lahorias besides their own group, while their boys as well marry the daughters of the Purbia Khatris.

The Panjajatis and Chhajatis

The Khatris of this group trace their homeland at Amritsar and Lahore. It consists of Beri, Bahal, Wahi, Vij and Saigal or Sahgal, while the Chhajati include Talwar, Tannan or Tandon,

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Chopra, Dhawn, Kakkar and Bohra.

The Barahjatis or Barahghar Khatris and the Banjais Kalan

The twelve sections of this group of Khatris include—Dhawan, Mahendru, Kakkar, Tandon or Tannan, Talwar, Bahal, Vij, Sahgal or Saigal, Chopra, Bohra or Wohra and Badhawan. The Bawanjais or Bawanjatis, already noticed earlier, are supposed to include Akal, Uppal or Opal, Kanchan, Kochar or Kochhar, Kapoha, Chaudhar or Chaudhri, Chanda, Chaddha, Jaluta or Jalota, Janjhi, Jhaloriya, Tangri, Dhiya, Dhanna—Dhummi, Suri, Dugal or Duggal, Darchhar, Thapar, Nanda, Purain or Puri, Bigga, Dahal, Purag, Wahl, Bakkal, Vedi or Bedi, Brijmani, Bhandari, Bhadwar or Bhadda, Markar, Mahta, Mauna, Moram, Mainraya, Madhwana, Madhuk, Ratna, Rara, Rana, Soni, Ratula, Sharbir, Solwar, Sachcharwal or Sachchar, Sethi, Sidh or Sikh, Sangiya, Sarin, Hasrana, Hirana and Bahal (Seth. 196-97). The Bawanjati in the Richana (Ravi-Chinab) Duab are classified into two sections: the *Bahrian* and the *Dharnian*. The former consists of 12 sub-castes: Dugal, Abhaya, Puri, Nanda, Wadhar or Badhari, Kochar or Kochhar, Uppal, Handa, Mangal, Abhi, Kulhar and Bhalla. The second group of *Dharnian* consists of 40 sub-castes: Asri, Bahama, Sarni, Bahal, Bhambri, Bahlari, Bhopar, Patpali, Bedi or Vedi, Bajaj, Bhandari, Tulli, Thapar, Chatta, Jadhar, Janrally, Johar, Chaudri, Dhir, Dahal, Dhopar, Dilauri, Rekhi, Sachchar, Soni, Suri, Sof, Sarin, Sabal, Sial, Sarraf, Chathatti, Katiyal, Lamba, Lakhdani, Mal, Madhuk, Barha or Warha, Wasi and Bachher.

A comparison of the list of Bhujai or Bawanzatis in general and that of the Rachan Doab furnish some identical names of sub-castes such as Uppal, Kochar, Puri, Vedi, Bhandari, Duggal, Nanda, Sacchar, Thapar, Soni, Suri, Bhandari etc., but some are missing in the other list such as Kanchan, Tangri, Bigga, Akal etc. and a many new ones are introduced. These include Handa, Kulhar, Abhaya, Bhambri, Dhir, Dhopar, Bajaj, Johar—Sarraf, Kaliyal, Lamba, Lakhdais, Madhuk etc. These omissions and substitution of new names in the other list could be due to the emergence of new sub-castes and absence of members of the other sub-castes in the new area. The formation of such castes could be on vocational or geographical basis or on some other considerations. A detailed study of the

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surnames of the Khatris need therefore be made after taking into account the reference to the Bhunjais or Bawanjatis in the Eastern part of the country beyond Delhi and Agra—to include Khatris of U.P., Bihar and Bengal. These sub-caste names are confined only to Northern India.

The Purbia Khatris

According to Seth (p. 198), this term Purbia or Pawadhe is applied to those Khatris who have made the eastern districts of India from Etawah to Calcutta their home. This appears to be a broader and a more general way of looking at the Khatris in this vast area. The *Pachadhas* or *Paschardhas* are also traced in this part of the country who confine their marital relationship only to the *Dhaighars* and *Charghars*—actually the four sub-castes—Mehra—called Mehrotra in this part, Kapur, Khanna and Tandon. Some sub-castes of the Barahghar or twelve sections are also included in this bigger congregation forming an exogamous group. This bigger one includes, besides the earlier four, Seth, Buhara, Kakkar, Dhawn, Mahendru, Vij, Chopra, Sahgal or Saigal. These Barahghars could take girls from the Bawanjatis but do not give them in return. Among the Bawanjatis the common ones are Budhwar, Talwar, Bahal, Kochar, Ghuja, Sur, Jhanjhi, Handa, Malakh Majira, Mehra, Tulse Nanda, Pasra, Gangi, Jaluta or Jalota, Binayaka and Purain or Puri.

Sub-Sections of the sub-castes

Seth also furnishes lists of the sub-divisions among the sub-castes of the Khatris (p. 202). Thus, one finds that the Mehra of Mehrotras have 17 sub-sections including Safiltaleka, Nath-khol or Laluana, Jagdharia, Nim Taleka, Sainchara, Baliya, Kanowjiya, Churi Khol, Karkathal, Karhai Chor. These sub-divisions seem to be based again on some geographical, or local factors, or some strange custom or any particular incident. The originator seems to have played some role in evolving a new sub-section. The Kapurs are equally divided into 16 sub-sections including Kodon Khani, Surtaj or Kultaj, Makra, Thakura, Malakru, Karahichor, Malla Gaddu, Kotli-ka-Kapur, Chappar-wale Kapur. Comparing the sub-sections of the two castes, there is an identical reference to Karahai-chor—the cauldron

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lifter in both the sub-castes. This must have been a common custom among the two castes, as one finds the lifting of the pair of the bridegroom's shoes as the marriage ceremony is on, and its return on payment to the young sister-in-law. Among the Khannas too, there is a section of Batlohichor—the lifter of the Kettle. Its other sub-divisions are Lassi Khanna, Gajariya, Kathol, Dhuvadhar Khanna listed out of 15. The list recorded by Seth (op. cit pp. 202-203) includes the following sub-sections among several other sub-castes. Tandon—14, Wahi—2, Dhaun—12, Mahendra—11. Buhara or Bohra—10, Chopra—12, Kakkar—8, Sur or Suri—7, and Sahgal or Saigal—6. It is interesting to find one sub-caste or sub-section among another one, as for instance, Baijal, Talwar, Chopra and Kathyol are included among the Seth sub-caste, and Vij, Dwij, Beri, Wahi & Bhalla in the Kakkar one. The Suri has Badhawan. Jatta figures as a sub-section among the Seth and Chopra sub-castes. The giving of names to such sub-sections could be due to some incident or particular usage in the family as also closer ties between two sub-castes in the form of alliance for a particular occassion. An explanation for such ceremonies is recorded by Seth (p. 204) in the case of 'Nath-Khol Mehras' and 'Sifiltale-ke-Mehra'. The ladies of the first sub-section giye up the use of nose-ring after the birth of a male child, while the second sub-section is suggestive of a brave fight put up by the Mehras under the ramparts of a fort. Place names as also those of ancestors of repute also suggest some sub-sections. The Kanoujiya Mehras take their name from Kanouj while the Laluana Mehras are named after Lallu and Jagadhariya after Jagdhar his brother and Lassi Khannas after Lassi (nephew—sister's son of the two brothers). The Kodon Khani Kapurs trace their origin to the liberality shown by one of their ancestors in 1500 V.S., by distributing grain (Kodon) from their buffer stock at the time of some famine.

Khatri caste names

The reference to the Khatri sub-castes of any of the groups demands fair consideration and proper scrutiny. Some attempts have been made in the past by Rose (Vol. II, pp. 501ff), Tandon and Seth and a few others. The scientific explanation for such caste terminology or taking of surnames could be geographical,

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vocational and even accidental happening as might be viewed with celebrity. A conservative approach would be to tag on some of the names with lunar and solar constellations. Thus, according to Rose, Bhalla takes its name from *bhala*—a spear, Bhasin from *bhas*—brilliancy, Bohra from *buha*—a column or military envoy, Dhavan or Dhaun—from the root dhava meaning runner or messenger, Kakkar from *Karkar*—strong or powerful, Kapur—*Karpur* meaning moon, Khanna from the *Khan*—a mine—said to mean a sapper, Mahendru from *Mahendra*—lord of the earth or chief, Mehra from *Mihir*, the Sun, Sahni from *Senani*—the chief of the army, Seth from *Sreshta* or headman, Tandon from *Maratanda*—the Sun or warrior.

Seth (op. cit p. 168) classifying the Kshatriyas of various gotras divides them into *Suryabansis*—solar, *Chandrabansis*—Lunar and *Agnibansis*, each sections including the members of the various gotras. These again with the passage of time were sub-divided into different sub-castes. According to him, the Mehras, Kakkars, Dhawans, Mahendrus, Bohras, Chopra, Suris, Sahgals, Sodhis, and Vedis belong to the Suryabansi (Solar) Section and Kapurs and Khannas to the Chandrabansi (Lunar) section, the Sarins include both of these while the Tandons fall under the Agnibansis. Tandon suggests (op. cit. p. 371) that most of the names of the Khatri families are taken from their military profession. The very names of these sects indicate the weapons used and the military arts practised by the Khatris. The Tandons are supposed to be heroes always gaining victory in battle, Mehrotra or Mehra from *Mihira* (Sun), Kapur from Karpura (moon), Dhaun from *dhanu*—archer. Mahendru—the great lords connected with Indra, Vyuhori or Bohra from *Vyuha-ari*—experts in breaking the columns of the enemies, *Khagge*—being experts in the use of *Khadga*—sword, Vija—from *Vijaya*—victory symbolising heroes noted for achieving victory, *uppal* Skt. *Utpalarana*—who jump or leap upon their enemies—fearless warriors, *Aggechal*—from *Agni*—experts in the use of explosives, *Patti* or *Pattipati*—officer or commander of a unit, *Astari* or *Astri*—experts in the use of astras—weapons, *Bhalla*—the lancers—or experts in missiles, Duggal or Dourgal connected with the fort and its security, *Seni* or *Senani*—"Commander of the forces", *Suri*—the heroes.

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The *Vedis* are considered as those adept in Vedic studies. The Puri or Purain can be taken as administrative head of a township.

The real explanation for these surnames might be traced in the context of geographical or avocational factors. The former includes not only sub-castes associated with township but also with rivers, as for instance, Khanna is the name of one of the *dhaighar* sub-caste, and is also the name of a township in Punjab. It is not certain whether this name did exist at the time when the Khatris of this particular sub-caste were associated with it. Similary, Tangri—the name of a sub-caste in the Bawanjati group is also the name of a river in the Punjab. Among the names associated with residence in a locality are Balgeria and Basi in Patiala, Bangar, Bardwani, Bhagal, Bhangabha, Desi, Deswal, Dharwal, Dhani, Gaddi, Gangotri, Gujrati, Kanojia, Kashmiri, Kharar, Mahlog, Majithia, Mandial, Marwari, Mathre, Nahan, Pahari, Panjali, Purbia, Qandhari, Ropar, Sabaran and Sangar. This practiee of taking surnames after residence in a particular locality is fairly common in modern time with such surnames like Badal, Bhullar, Barnala, Longowal etc.

The sub-castes based on occupations include those of Bajaz, Gahi, Gahndi, Gawal, Gurwar or Grover, Gochar, Langri, Lohania, Lohari, Qanungo, Pandi, Pathere, Patoi, Rachbandi, Rasain, Rathwal, Sapala. Those supposed to be based on social practices include Anand, Anant, Arya, Bans, Cham, Chamere, Chaudhari, Channa, Chhapar, Chhatre, Chhatwal, Chunda, Dalawari, Dandwadh, Dangwal, Dewane, Dharni. Some are supposed to be associated with religious sects or divinities, such as Devi, Govindi, Kesdhari, Khalsa, Lakhdata, Nanakpanthi, Nanakshahi, Narsingh, Nihang, Nirmala, Paras Ram, Raghubir, Ram Das, Ramanandi, Ram Chandi, Sachadeva, Sanatan, Samasi, Shambhu, Sita, Vasudeva. Many sub-castes are based on association with cities or towns like Aggarwal, Ahluwalia, Arora, Aulakh, Badhan, Baraich, Bhabra, Bhat, Bhatia, Chandolia, Chowla, Chitian, Jaswal, Kambhir, Kanet, Labang, Langoh, Mahajan, Mina, Pathan, Rajput, Rave, Rawal, Rora, Sainti, Saura, Sansi, Sial, Sindhu, Sud, etc.

The list of the Khatri sub-castes is enormous. The Bohjatis or non-descript Khatris including Bawanjatis or Bunjais Khurd

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are enumerated by Seth (210-11) numbering 538 plus 235 of Sarins (214-15), the 9 sections of the Khukrans, 17 of Gujrati Khatris, 77 of those living outside India, 25 of the Sukhara Khatris and the Aroras of the Northern half (Utradhe or Uttaradhe) numbering 60, totalling in all over a thousand castes in the greater Khatri Biradari. It would appear as if an individual took a surname after his place of residence, or avocation and subsequently his family and the offshoots dispersed in different directions, carried with them the family name. The role of the individual as the head of the family and the latter as a unit of the group within the caste now need be defined; and areas as also nature of the control over the bigger over the smaller unit be fully brought out.

Family and Kinship among the Khatris

The Khatri family is interlinked with the caste, and its small unit the sub-caste. It is not the individual but the joint family and its head who matter in the affairs of the family members in relation with the sub-caste group as also with the community as a whole. The sub-caste groups consisting of several families are endogamous. These inter-dine and inter-marry among themselves, and all the relations are from the same caste group. The family is submerged in the caste. The bonds of fraternal solidarity and the advantages of joint living characterise the ideal set up of a Khatri family. Ties of kinship among family members as also among those who could trace their common ancestry to several generations are fairly strong. Thus, after the death of a male or female member of the family, all those related by ties of kinship through a common ancestor have their heads shaven. The participation in a marriage ceremony could be ignored, but even a distant cognate cannot afford to be absent in funeral functions. The head of the family has also to be consulted even by distant relations from the paternal side at the time of negotiating a marriage. This aspect makes the ties of kinship fairly strong. The *Brihat Kutumba*—or 'the great family' might not be having a common shelter and a common *chulah*—or hearth and the members might be scattered differently in the city and even outside, but the occasions of festivities and mourning demand participation of one and all.

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The Khatri Sanskaras

The *Sanskaras*—rites and rituals prescribed for the Kshatriyas are followed in letter and in spirit by the Khatris. The cycle of such socio-religious rituals—festivities beginning with the conception and ending with the final liberation from the eternal process of coming and going (*avagaman*), could begin from the arrangement of marriage proposals and the rest that follows in the life span of the couple—these include the up-bringing of children, tonsure and sacred thread ceremonies, initiation into studies, the balancing of the scales of life—*artha* and *Kama*—production and procreation, and all the rest that follows. Religious functions and social festivities are a part of the life of the individual and the family. The Smritis prescribe sixteen Sanskaras of which the most important is marriage. While the Smritis prescribe eight forms of marriage—only the *Brahma* one is accepted by the Khatris. In all the Khatri families it is regarded as a sacrament, and its arrangement is supposed to be the religious duty of the parents. Negotiations as a rule begin from the side of the girl's parents, directly or first through some common relation. The role of the family priest (*purohit*) is no less important. The demand for the horoscope of the boy is the first step in this direction and when the family priest or a good astrologer is satisfied regarding the compatibility of the *grahas*—constellations in the two horoscopes as also the *gunas* which are expected to fit in. It is not an unusual feature, if both the parties agree, to place the two horoscopes before the family deity in a temple, invoking the blessings of the Presiding Lord to take care of the conjugal happiness and prosperity of the young couple who are thus engaged in matrimony.

The marriagable age prescribed for girls and boys in the community is being raised with the passage of time, but at the beginning of the century, the normal age of marriage for boys was between 15-18, and for girls before attaining puberty. Engagements were no doubt made even years ahead. There used to be no *Karardad* or monetary settlement among the Khatris. Earlier the boy's approval of the girl was never sought, and he could never question his parent's decision in this matter. The couple were occasionally playmates. Gradually they realised their position as life partners. With the raising of

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the age of marriage, as also the cultivation of a broader and healthier outlook, the Khatri married couples are now fully matured, and at many a times select their own life partner. Things have changed and the parents generally approve of such proposals if initiated by their wards, even if the other party is not of the same caste, leave aside the social hierarchical part which is fast eroding. With this new development and change in the outlook of Khatri society, there have been some changes in marriage ceremonies without in the main affecting the principal rituals—the *Saptapadi*—the taking of the seven steps together around the sacred fire, and the *Kanyadana*—the offering of the girl by the parents to the prospective bridegroom.

The engagement ceremony called *Sagun*—used to be a simple affair, with sweets, fruits and some cash, usually a gold guinea was all that matters. The elders were respected with *Puebha*—offerings in cash varying from rupees four to eleven or so. The girl's father put the *tilak* on the prospective bridegroom's forehead and the *Purohita*—priest from the other side announced the bethrothal ceremony. The period between engagement and marriage varied according to the age of the prospective couples and circumstances of the families. In between there were exchange of gifts—sweets, clothes and toys and *guttas*—coloured small wooden pieces used in play as also *rassi*—rope and *patia*—plank—for the girl to enjoy swings in the rainy season. The *Tika* or *Tilak*—the second presentation ceremony—generally preceded a little before the time of marriage which was equally reciprocated by *gahna pahnana*—the ornamentation ceremony of the prospective bride, performed by the ladies of the bridegroom's side at the house of the bride. On both the occasions, proper respect was shown through presentation in cash and kinds to the bridegroom's party. The mother and the grand-mother as also elder sisters and sisters-in-law were duly respected with offerings in cash and clothes.

With the passage of time things have now changed with the gap period between engagement and marriage being reduced to an irreducible minimum, and display of elegance and pomp with a vengeance sometimes on both the occasions. The engagement ceremony itself begins with the presentation of a diamond engagement ring, if one could afford it, lots of

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presents and a gala party. The couples no longer suffer in anguish with the pangs of separation, being fairly young and mature, and even move out for social outings as also visiting each others place with the blessings of the parents on both the sides. The old conservative in-laws might still hesitate in allowing their son-in-laws to mix freely with their daughters.

Marriage Ceremonies

Marriage rituals in the past started days before the wedding day—with folk music on *dholak*—a round oblong drum played with the hands, and *majira*—small cymbals accompanying the former. This was considered auspices and provided an opportunity for the ladies for a get-another. It has now been given another name, rather synonymous, *Mahila Sangeet*, at the house of the bride. The anointment of the girl and the boy was done a day or two earlier depending on an auspicious time, and both had their movements restricted, in common parlance called *Sahelage*. This precaution was taken to avoid possibility of any mishap. The marriage day actually started with the *Shanti Pujan*—called in some families *Sat Bengalis*—probably as a second insurance against any calamity. Seven couples were also involved in crushing raw turmeric (*haldi-ki-gath*) on a grinding wheel—*chakia*. This was followed by *Tani bandhan* ceremony—the tying of the *munja* rope at the four corners with an earthern cup and saucer tied in a red cloth, hanging in the middle—done by the girl's brother-in-law or her maternal aunt's husband. The Ganesa *pujan* or invocation to the God Vinayaka, as he is called in Maharashtra, was deemed necessary on every occasion. An earthen pitcher—*Kalasa* was covered with a red piece of cloth and an earthen lamp filled with pure ghee and a wick—duly lighted—kept on burning for the ceremonial period. Among the Khatris in the West Delhi and Punjab—it is given a simple name of *Puja* and this is followed by a distribution of big *batasas*—sugar candis to all the participants on the occasion. At the bridegroom's house the same rituals are observed.

Several minor ceremonies were as well performed before the actual wedding one. These included *Tilabatti* or *Tilwah*—the annointing part. Soon after the performance of *Shantipujan*, or *Ganesa Pujan*, in the evening both the girl and the boy were

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seated on a plank at their home. A little oil was dropped by way of offering to the Gods, followed by a few drops sprinkled over the feet, hands and forehead by all the relations, with a few blades of grass. The ladies performed the *arti* of the boy and the girl to the accompaniment of a chorus song wishing conjugal happiness. This ceremony seems to correspond to the Vedic *abhi-sheka* or consecration ceremony. Another one popularly known as *nanjha* was performed for a couple of days preceding the wedding night with the *Arti*—moving of lighted small lamps placed in a brass plate round the face of the groom and the bride, to the accompaniment of chorous music and the distribution of sweets.

The *Kuar Dhoti* was the sending of an unbleached (Kori) *dhoti*, with henna (*mehndi*), rice, gur, turmerics and gold and silver coated fruits arranged in brass plates. It was first dedicated to the goddess Gauri and then touched by the bride. Her nose ring (*natha*) and *Chura*—the red ivory bangles were, however, provided by her maternal grandfather or his son.

The proper marriage function continues to be at the bride's place. If it is a local marriage, then the problem of taking a bridal party from the bridegroom's house to that of the bride is a simple affair. In the past the issuing of invitation cards was not a normal procedure. It was the barber of the community who went to the houses of the members of the *biradari* announcing the time of the *Peshgara*—as it was then called—requesting the elders to join the function at the bride's place at a particular time generally about 7 to 8 P.M. depending on the season. The small boys accompanying him would repeat in a chorous—*Zaroor Zaroor ayiyega*—'please do come, certainly come'. It was a pleasing sight to see the young boys generally between 10-15 or even younger—all unmarried shouting at the top of their voice—in a chorous. The guests assembled at the house of the bride and were treated to betels and cigarettes on demand. Generally the guests abstained from eating anything at the bride's house. It was taken as a bigger family affair and people were more interested in offering their services rather than in accepting sweets in a girl's marriage. The procession then went rather slowly to the bridegroom's house, generally not far away, accompanied by a *Shahnai* party in a solemn manner. On reaching the place the *purohita*—priest announced

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the arrival of the party for taking the bridegroom to the bride's residence for marriage. A caprisoned mare was carried to the boy's house for taking him.

The first ceremony was the *Milani*—the embracing part of the father-in-laws, as also the grand and the maternal ones of both the sides—preceded by the purohits of the two sides. This *milani* was done before the bride's house. In such *milanis*, both put a coin in their hands and taking it round the head of the other (*bari-pheri*) gave it to some indigent person—generally some poor Brahmin. The bride's parents and others offered *Puch*—called *Patole ki Puch* to their counter-parts on the other side through the Purohit. Once this part of the preliminary function was done, the bridegroom got down from the mare with the help of his prospective brother-in-law or some elderly person and taken inside house. He carried with him his sword. The mother-in-law performed the *arti*—taking the lighted wicks in a *thali*—metal plate round the face of the boy by way of benediction, with other ladies of the house joining in the singing part. The *Sahabala*—the young companion, usually the nephew from the brother or the sister's side, always accompanied his uncle seated at the back on the same mare. The bridegroom's party was generally entertained with light refreshments. While entering the house, the bridegroom was expected to touch the fringe of the *tani*—consisting of an earthern cup containing akshata—rice, *roli*-red powder, and *supari*-bet nut—all wrapped within a red coloured piece of cloth and tied in the middle of the courtyard just above the *bedi*—sacrificial spot. This *bedi* and its preparation was undertaken by some expert persons. Four banana tree stumps were placed at all the four corners—interlinked with the help of bamboo bars over which was wrapped satton and other silken brocade, with arches prepared of the cut bamboo pieces, pieced at different ends. Small pieces of toys and balloons were nicely hung at different corners, and so also was the flower and paper buntings stretched from one end to the other. The *bedi* was a sort of a show piece set up for that particular occasion and its gala appearance attracted everybody's attention.

The beginning of the marriage ceremony started after the barat party had settled down. In a marriage where the bridegroom was from the same locality, all the relations and friends

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returned to their homes, leaving one or two elderly persons to be present there during the performance of the marriage ceremony which was expected to be a whole-night affair. In the other case as well, the majority of the groom's party left for its temporary place of residence arranged for the purpose—usually a *dharmasala* or public rest house. The dinner for the marriage party was arranged there; that at the bride's place was scheduled for the next day. In Punjab and in Delhi—the bride's father generally sent cooked food including fruits and sweets and other edibles in the form of *mejawani*. There was no subsequent dinner arrangement but at the eastern end, a formal dinner called *janda* was a must at the bride's house for the members of the groom's party alone.

The formal ceremonies started with the bridegroom performing the *Ganesa Puja*, and *Navagraha Shanti*, followed by other initial formalities before the girl was brought from inside. She had to undergo a lot of privation in the form of fasting for the day. For the *mayan* ceremony in Punjab and *mailrakhna* in the eastern parts, she was dressed in simple old clothes—with raw sugar or gur candy placed in her lap. The *mauli*—the auspicious red thread was tied round her waist. Annointed with sandal (chandan) paste, she was bathed in the sacred water drawn by her elder brother-in-law and sister to-gether-called *ghat-bharana*, and her hair dressed up for the occasion with long plaits, and hand and feet were dyed with red henna. She was dressed in red clothes, rich and beautiful and adorned with jewellery from head to feet. She arrived in the marriage *mandap* and was seated to the right of the husband on a wooden plank (*patra*). The wedding ceremonies and rituals started generally at 11 or so in the night and were numerous. The marriage ceremony lasting for several hours seemed to consist of three parts : The worship of the fire by the bride and the bridegroom the vows and the ritual enjoing their union as husband and wife. The oaths taken by them demanded fidelity and love in sickness and happiness, and the husband ensured her life partner, full security and took her as *ardhangini*—his better half of the body. This had to be followed in letter and spirit—till death fell them apart. The most important part of the marriage was the *Kanyadana*—or the bestowing as gift of the bride jointly by the parents of the bride. This was followed by

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Saptapadi—or the taking of seven steps by the bridegroom followed by the bride round the sacred fire. These two rituals are the main ones in a Khatri marriage. There are several other customary ceremonies—which were fairly common in every Khatri marriage. Some have been dispensed with for want of time.

The *Sendurdan*—or putting the vermillion mark at the middle of the parting line on the head of the girl, enabled the boy to have a full view of the face of his life partner. After this, the couple retired to the interior room of the house where before the family deity, the assembled ladies headed by the mother-in-law had a full look at the bridegroom, now a part of the family. This was also the occasion when the poetical skill of the boy was tested by the ladies insisting on his reciting some *Chanda*—corrupted to *Channa*. The boy recited these and was duly rewarded. The presentation affair was included as a part of the marriage function. Relations and friends again made presents through their wives. *Lavas*—or pop-corns were exchanged between the giver and the receiver of the gifts, the former blessing the couples for their prosperity. The marriage formalities continued till the early part of the morning when the boy returned to his residence or the *janewasa* the temporary residence of the groom's party.

The day following had a few more functions at the bride's house. The boy was invited to a bath in a wooden pan—called *Kathautinahan*. He was bathed with scented water and provided with new clothes. Similar presentation of new clothes and ornaments—called *Baricharana*—was done at the bride's place by the ladies especially coming from the bridegroom's house. These ladies were close relations—sisters or sisters-in-law. The bride was fully loaded with ornaments, depending on the position and status of the parties. The groom's personal income and status that time, did not count, as he was not then an earning member. In the night time, the bridegroom's party was invited to a sumptuous dinner called *Janda*—served in new utensils purchased for the occasion. These included *thal*—plate, *katoris*—metal cups, spoons and a tumbler, usually five pieces in number. After the dinner, these very utensils were thoroughly washed and cleaned and then sent to the bridegroom's place for distribution to every member of the party along with a small cash amount. This formal dinner—or *janda*—was meant

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only when the party was from an outstation. It was not customary in those days to demand a formal dinner—now *sin-quanon*—in every marriage—local or from outside. The *janda* or formal dinner was also an occasion for the settlement of all dues—like *bidai*—pucha, mutual expenses, or those incurred by one on behalf of the other on *Sahnai* or *atasbaji*—fire works etc. The dinner part was sometimes delayed consequent to the intransiquent attitude of the bridegroom's party. There were some trouble shooters in those days as well. The last day was fixed for *bari-palang* ceremony with the bride and bridegroom seated on the bed covered with presents and domestic things, and the parents of the bride finally made a gift of these. The *bahuliya* or the *doli* function in Punjab was arranged by the bridegroom's side. Both the bride and bridegroom were taken in a palanquin—an open one carried on shoulders by four to six persons—to the accompaniment of Shahnai music, preceded by anar or pomegranate fire work. There was no torch-light procession in the modern sense, nor was there any bhangra dance—with the twist played by young boys to modern western tones. The entire show was sober and dignified, free from flamboyancy.

The change within the last sixty years has been rather fast. The marriage ceremony is now a one-day affair with a reception at the bride's place, a more simple affair—exchange of garlands in the newly introduced *jaimala* ceremony, a good dinner, simple marriage—only *Saptapadi* and *Kanyadana*, rather an hour's affair or maximum two—all arranged sometimes even in a decent hotel where a *bedi* is set up and a *Pandit* is also provided. All this is arranged by the hotel itself. The next morning the couple leave the hotel after enjoying a nights privacy for home enroute to a week's long honeymoon, either at a hill station or elsewhere. Only this much is recognised that marriage continues to be a sacrament. Dowry, once tabooed amongst the Khatris, is now at its galore and there are instances of dowry deaths as well for which the lecherous and spineless husband is much to blame. The grown up girls are interested in setting up their independent home and have not that much of compatability to pull on with their in-laws from whom they demand much more than they could give in return. The marital circle has now expanded, the *ghars* have been replaced by

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religion as a unit. Since inter-caste marriages are legally approved and recognised in society, there have been such cases in the Khatri community as well. The couples take the initiative and the parents generally accord their approval. These marriages are duly performed by a hired Pandit on a fee to accord sacramental sanctity. The *jajmani* system associated with the family priest seems now to be a dying affair.

Other Sanskaras—Rituals

The birth of the first child has always been an auspicious and festive occasion. It was, however, preceded by several rituals which unfortunately are not so prominent now. The *garbhadhana*—the initation day for conjugal proceedings, now described as deflowering, is also regulated according to the scriptural code. It is known as *Sohagrat*—the nuptial night and has a religious significance. Formerly the couple had to wait for an auspicious date when they could first meet at night. After the conception the *Punsvana* ceremony was performed in the fourth month. It was called *riti* and followed in the eighth month by another ceremony called *athamaya* or *bhode*. On both the occasions there was regular *puja* of Ganesa for the safety of the child in the womb and the successful termination of pregnancy. There were the usual presentations of gifts, including sweets and clothes for the couple as also for the husband's parents. The birth of the child necessitated at first the *namakarana* ceremony. The horoscope was prepared by the family astrologer and a *rashi* name was given. The child's name was also given by the head of the family. It may be interesting to learn that there was *Sutaka*—impurity for the entire family for a few days before this ceremony. If the the child was born in *mools*—evil constellation then a *Shanti* or pacification ceremony had to be performed for the occasion. As months rolled on and the child was a few month's old, the pehni or putting on stiched clothes ceremony was done, followed by *annaprasana*—the tasting of food, generally in the sixth month. On an auspicious day, an elderly person—generally the head of the family—took some *halwa*—a sweet pudding of milk and rice—in a spoon and put a little in the mouth of the child for tasting it.

The tonsure or *Chudakaram sanskara* was done according to

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convenience, generally in the third or fifth year, with the propitiation in the *kuladevata*. The hair was removed by the barber either at the bank of some river or at some religious centre. In this context the family tradition was generally followed. The *Devakaj*—Skt. *Devakarya* is also associated with this occasion. The young lady could now perform the traditional family worship which till then had been the preserve of the mother-in-law. It is interesting to notice it among the Brahma-Kshatriyas of Gujarat, who migrated from Punjab in the 14th century A.D. After the *mundan* ceremony—the boy was sent to *Guruji*—the teacher for his formal education. This too was an occasion for celebration among the Khatris. The boy was brought before the Guruji in his *taksal*—or seat of learning, had his formal initiation—*takhtipuja*—propitiation of the writing tablet. The sweet balls—*bundi-ke-laddus* were lavishly distributed on this occasion. A few years later, before he was eleven, he had to undergo another ritual—*sanskara*—called *Yajnopaveeta*—the sacred thread ceremony. This was an occasion of considerable importance, since it entitled the boy to step in the next stage of his life. He could now perform *deva* and *pitri karma* or oblation to gods and waves. This ceremony was performed at the traditional river bed centre or in some temple with the enlightened priest giving the sacred *Gayatri mantra* in the ear of the boy. After the usual tonsuring of the hair, followed by bath in the river, the boy sat near the Brahmin, who was charged to give this mantra. This Gayatri mantra is worth recording in original as also in translation.

ॐ भूर्भुवः स्वः तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यम्
भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि धियोयोनः प्रचोदयात् ॥

"O that Glory of Savitri—most excellent. The effulgence of the Divine let us meditate upon. May it inspire us with understanding upon". The sacred thread it put round from the left shoulder down to the right side of the belly and he is enjoined to lead the life of a *bramachari*—a celibate in body and mind. The *dvija* or twice born in ancient times was initiated in his Vedic studies from this day onwards. This recitation of *Gayatri mantra* has been a source of great strength to those who have faith in its efficacy and I have personally realized its strength

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when faced with difficult situations in life. It is a pity that this sacred thread ceremony has now virtually ceased to be an independent *sanskara* and is reduced to a formality done a day before the marriage ceremony.

The death in a Khatri family demands personal attendance of all the relations at the time of cremation. It is said that one might miss a marriage function but wilful absence on these occasions not so frequent now, could mean the snapping of relations. It is true that now with better medical facilities the age of longevity has gone up, and the maternity deaths too have gone down because of improved care and attention. Such was not the case in earlier times and many girls died in the course of the first delivery. So also was the infant mortality rate. Deliveries in hospitals was uncommon since it involved the presence of male doctors and students in wards. With frequent deaths of young and old in the community and the locality, an elderly member of the family, not very economically productive, undertook the task of personal presence on such occasion. The dead body of a babe was carried on a *pankha*—covered with a shroud and he was buried—not cremated. The young and old were carried on shoulders, on two bamboo poles (*tikti*) with small bamboo pieces serving as arms—the dead body continues to be covered by a white shroud or a red *dushala* if a woman died as a *suhagin* (with a living husband). The mourning crowd keeps on shouting *Ram Nam Satya hai*. The last rites at the cremation ground are performed by the son for his parents. The closest agnate officiates in the absence of a direct one. The bier is placed on logs of wood, and equally covered by these logs with pure ghee and sandal wood chips used as auxiliaries. After the performance of the puja at the cremation ground conducted by a *mahabrahman*—the pyre is lit by the son who formerly had his head shaved and had to put on one long piece of cloth, and another to cover his body. He was to come to the cremation ground every day for filling the water in the pitcher especially hung from the branch of a tree. The ashes were collected on the fourth day and immersed in the sacred water of the Ganga or elsewhere at some religious centre. The 10th, 13th and 17th days were important and involved the gathering of the ladies on the first and the gents on the second occasion, on the 13th day after the offering of the

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pindas or performance of obsequial rites. The *Pagri-bandhana* ceremony was done with the new clothes and turban provided by the father-in-law, or in his absence by the brother-in-law. The latter tied the turban round the head of the son-in-law who then assumed the status of the head of the family. This ceremony in full is still done among the Khatris and corresponds to the ancient *Murdhabhisheka*—the consecration of the head of the family. The in-laws also provided clothes and cash to the widow of the deceased at the *Kapradalna* ceremony on the tenth day before sun rise. The person who had lit the pyre became pure and he and the family members thanked the participants with folded hands. On the last day the Brahmins and members of the community were fed. It is interesting to note that on the 13th day, the *mahabrahmana* received a number of items ranging from food grain, to bed, clothing and even those items which were of interest and taste to the departed soul, for his use in the other world. This reminds one of the items of use buried along with the dead body of the Pharoh in an Egyptian tomb.

The funeral rites have now been simplified and days of mourning and impurity reduced from thirteen to four. An obituary is announced through the Press. There is no callman—especially chartered to announce deaths in mohallas. The despatch of a hand written postcard to relations staying outside with a corner cut at the top is being replaced by black bordered printed card, on behalf of the family. The person still lits the pyre with the chanting of the Vedic mantras, but he does not have his head shaved and his impurity, if any, is confined to only 3 days. On the fourth day a *havan* and *Shanti Patha* are done and he becomes pure. The *Kriya* on the 13th day continues to be performed, followed by the *Pagribandhan* ceremony. The ladies' mourning—called *Sjapah*, which was a regular feature for a year in Punjab, seems to have been given up. The *barsi*—or yearly final ceremony is done even much earlier. Sometime the mourning period has to be drastically cut down because of some forthcoming auspicious function in the family.

Position of Khatri women

The progress of any caste depends on the status of women in that community. If they are relegated to the background

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then the progressive advancement of that community is an extremely slow process. The educated Khatri girls distinguish themselves in different fields. Early in the twentieth century, the only happiness of Khatri women lay in their home and hearth and girls were expected to be good cooks and well up in sewing and knitting Their entertainments and diversions were festive occasions or nighbourly gossips of family affairs. Each couple had between 8-12 children, then not considered an unusully big number, and it was not found difficult to bring them up. The old ladies had a dominating role to play in the family which was a joint one. They were equally interested in their *Thakurji*—small divinities in bronze, which were kept in every family. There was also a family goddess who had to be propitiated on festive occasions. All the Hindu festivals were enjoyed by one and all, and the ladies had also their share of fun. They prepared special *pakawan*—sweet preparations. *Bhaibhaina* was a special festive occasion among the Khatris and this was only confined to the ladies. Fasting was a normal feature and it was not unusual for the ladies to fast atleast on four-five days in a month. The Khatri woman's fidelity towards her husband is best exhibited in the *Karwa-Chauth*—the exchange of *Karwa*—an earthern pot with small sticks attached to it. This fast lasting for 24 hours still continues to be widely practised. Sighting the moon in the night after the day's ordeal, the ladies perform puja by offering oblation *arka* to the moon and then break their fast. Even small married girls in their early teens were not spared from this ordeal. Despite all these acts of propitiation, there were occasional deaths of young grooms. The young widow was left forlorn without any chance of having a second marriage. The widowers, on the other hand, could marry again irrespective of age consideration. They sometimes indulged into clandestine relationship with public women—then a recognised and accepted institution.

There has been a tremendous change in the position of women within the last sixty to seventy years. The girls are married rather late, the rate of infant as also women's mortality has considerably gone down and there have been cases of widow remarriage as well, though still it is not a regular feature in Khatri society. The parents doing so have nothing to fear from the community. The caste grip over the families and

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individuals is considerably relaxed. There was a time when the head of the caste or group had a firm control over the activities of the individual and there was a fear of ostrasization by the community. Now with the circle of marital relations being widened, the control of the community is being considerably reduced, if not completely eliminated. Caste continues to be a pressure group for others, but the Khatris, because of their broad outlook and progressive views, are seldom moved by caste considerations. The chances of divisions among the Khatris, as were very common in the past, popularly known as *dhare*—groups—with one party completely segregating itself from the other—are now completely ruled out. I have seen occasions in the past when small married girls could not visit their parent's home because of this clear-cut division or some controversial issue. Local and community interests in those days were of foremost importance. Persons indulging in crime or supposed to have some hand in it were penalised, and were compelled to perform penance—*Praschit*—even if acquitted by the law courts. This fear of social boycott by the community was a great deterrant. The fear to some extent continues even now, and there are instances of such social boycotts of those and their families guilty of heinous crimes like wife burning.

Religion and Religious Life of the Khatris

The Khatris constitute a deeply religious community—not self-centred but humanitarian in their outlook and helpful in their way of life. Religion and morality are integrated in the life style of the Khatris. Secular by nature, yet religious by disposition, the Khatris seek religious solace from all divinities. As such, they are equally devoted to Vishnu, Siva and Devis, as also to Hanuman. They even worship totemistic symbols—like snakes and trees and some used to have a Kothri—a small room for Syed Saheb. A niche—called *ala* was also named after him. Some Muslim saint or divine was equally propitiated by these few in the past, and to a marginal extent it is still being done here and there, and so also *Pir Saheb*—or Muslim saint's *dargaha* is visited. These things in the past formed part of the life style of a Khatri family which invoked blessings from all quarters. Religious taboos were equally enforced in food habits. By and large, vegetarian in nature, the Khatris were strict in

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food discipline. The *Chauka*—round the *chulah*—was the area of special preserve for the lady mistress of the house. She entered there after her morning bath, dressed in a silken *dhoti* or *saniya* without an under-garment or brassier and prepared the morning meal—called *Kacha Khana*—consisting of *dal*—pulse, *chaval*,—rice, and *rotl*—baked loaf on the iron plate—*tawa*. No body could have his meal, except after the morning bath and the visit to the temple, and that too inside the *chauka*, dressed in a bare *dhoti*. In winter too there was no exception, and the upper part of the body was covered by a portion of the *dhoti*. Onion and garlic were out of bounds in the *chauka*. The lady remained in her preserve till everybody had his meal, followed by young female members. She was the last one to have her meals to avoid pollution (*jutha*) of the *chauka*. A line drawn by a piece of coal demarcated the *chauka* area. Sometime it was permanently done. Ladies in menses could not enter the *chauka* either for preparing or for taking food. They were considered impure for three days, and even physical touch necessitated bath and change of clothes. This discipline was religiously enforced and no amount of educational or liberal attitude could change it.

The ladies at home continue to be religious-minded as devotees of Rama and Krishna, and read *Ramayana* or *Sukha Sagar* in Hindi. In the month of *Sravana* there is sometimes a week long recitation of *Shrimad-Bhagavatam*—called *Saptah*—in a temple attended mostly by elderly ladies and men. The learned Pandit who recites it is heavily rewarded at the end in the form of presents in cash and kind. Fasting too by the ladies is done for the propitiation of some diety or pacification of some evil *graha*—star—in the horoscope of a near and dear one. The unmarried girls still fast if they had crossed the marriageable age, or for getting a good husband. Reference is already made to *Karwa-Chautha*. The men folk as also ladies' fast on two important occasions—*Shivaratri* and *Krishna Janamasthami* as also on *Ram Naumi*. These continue to be popular and equally important religious occasions for the Hindus in general. The month of *Sravana*—August-September—is considered very auspicious. The *Sravani*—group recitation of *Rudri*—for invoking the blessings of Rudra-Shiva is an equally important community worship. This is followed later

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on with the fortnightly *Pitri Paksha*—the 'manes fortnight'. Besides offering water—*tarpana*—in the sacred river to the ancestors—supposed to be in the other world looking for this occasion, Brahmins are fed on the appointed dates (*tithi*) of individual manes (male and female) death upto the third generation. These include father, grand-father and the great-grand-one and their spouses. The Smritis, therefore, enjoin everyone to have a son who could give water—*tarpan*—to his ancestors. This is followed by Durga or *Chandi Puja*. The *Kalasa*—pitcher filled with water and covered by an earthen saucer containing oil and a burning wick is kept for a week. Before it on a small earthen area are spread java—inferior wheat which soon sprouts. The eighth day is called *Devi ki Asthami*—with *Karahi* of *Suji* and *ghee* plus sugar preparation, with small earthern lamps (*diya*) placed all round and a *gola*—coconut—duly annointed with red powder (*roli*), to accord it a religious sanctity. Eight small girls—called *Kanyas* are honoured with their *puja*—followed by offerings in cash and sweets. The *gola*—soft coconut—is pulped by the head of the family and its pieces are distributed by way of *prasad*—partaking. This *Devi-ashthami Puja* is done twice a year in April and October. The elderly lady of the house generally fasts for eight days on both the occasions.

The *Dashehra Puja* is done on the tenth day—two days later, with the worship of the *astras*—arms. The Ramlila is a community entertainment ballet which continues to be very popular, and is performed in a sophisticated manner. More than a month later the festival of light—*Dewali*—follows, which is another occasion for gaities. On this day, the Lakshmi Puja is done. Businessmen change their accounts registers. Lakshmi and Ganesh *murtis*—images of clay—are set up in the house every year and then worship is supposed to ensure happiness and prosperity for the following year. The next day is the *Govardhana Puja* for the elders while the ladies prepare good food—Puris, Pakwan, and mixed vegetables—all in one. The *Bhai dvij* is of special significance, with the sisters putting *Tilak*—red oblong mark on their brother's forehead and entertaining them with sweets, receiving in return a good amount from them. This is different from the *Rakhi* festival in the month of *Sravana*—August-September—when the sisters tie a

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silken thread round the wrist of their brothers. It is also called *guriabandhana*—the tieing of yellow thread dolls.

There are several other festivities throughout the year—the spring festival—*Basant*—followed more than a month later by *Holi* or *Doli-Jatra*—the colour festival. All these festivals have secular as well as religious backgrounds. While *Basant* heralds the coming of the spring, *Holi* is associated with several things—the ripening of the crop, the burning of the *Holika*—the aunt of Prahlad. This is also the occasion of family and friends gatherings and even old disputes end with a warm embrace of friends and relations. These semi-religious festivities continue to be enjoyed in a dignified manner.

A few new ones are also introduced, like the birth day functions which follow the western pattern with cake cutting and candle blowing. The visit to temples—especially that of Hanuman or Sankatmochan on Tuesdays has gained momentum. *Sravani*—on a personal and community basis—is receding though it has not faded out. So also the *Sradha*—offering to manes—is not very significant. Besides economic factors, paucity of time as also fast dwindling figures of Brahmin priests account for such a situation. The Brahmins have taken over to other avocations, as neither Sanskrit learning for professional purposes nor the *jajmani* system could meet the high cost of living or keep pace with the rate of inflation. The social taboo—of taking food on obsequial occasions is another factor accounting of this decline in socio-religious values attached to these festivals and festivities. Pilgrimage, once an important programme in the life of a Khatri, continues to interest him, despite the rise in the cost of travel as also its rush. Nevertheless more people go on pilgrimage, even at a fairly young age by way of change and outing.

The New Ethos

There has been a gradual change in social outlook of the Khatris, particularly youngmen and their spouses. The joint family no doubt continues but the ties binding all the members into an integrated unit are not so strong. Personal, economic and environmental factors as also impact of the West are instrumental in a radical change in the present social set up. The Khatris forming a progressive enlightened community are not

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slow in catching up the new trends in social set up. As such changes are inevitable and could be traced in dress, food habits, and in areas of pastime and recreations, and broadly speaking in human behaviour as well. These equally account for irritants and tensions in family circles. The stronger member tend to exploit the weaker ones. Youngmen living with their parents, look up to the latter to reduce their needs, and meet the family requirements to the maximum in terms of their contribution—monetary and physical support. Working couples also account for the family malaise. Both assert their needs, heighten their importance and inflate their demands on each other. In such a situation, the lot of the aged mother-in-law or the widower father-in-law is worse. He has no place to go, his needs are reduced to the minimum and he or she is expected to provide the maximum possible comforts to the family. His personality is more or less eclipsed while that of the mother-in-law is in no way better. Food habits have similarly changed. The healthy and happy atmosphere of the house is now surcharged with tension mounting at several fronts—economic discontentment and disparity as also in an insatiable lust for new and ultra modern gadgets because the neighbours have these—leading to frustration and marital disharmony. The impact of the West is more with the vices attached to it. More values are fast eroding. An all-round change—perceptible and imperceptible—can be traced in the Khatri society of modern time. The only heartening factor is the contribution of the Khatris in different areas—administration, science, literature, cinema, industry, banking and even in defence. A proper prespective for this study on an all-India pattern and on a wider canvas, would no doubt demand a sketch of the broad contour lines which are no doubt provided by the history of the Khatris and their contribution in Medieval India as also in Modern India between 1000-1800 and Nineteenth century and after, respectively.

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CHAPTER 4

Khatris in Medieval India

The assimilation of foreigners in Indian society was a continuing process in Ancient India. This process, however, lasted till the coming of the Arabs and other Muslims in India. As a result the original Kshatriyas had to accommodate the new entrants, and this brought out some change in the behavioural pattern and it equally helped in the emergence of new avocations. The Inter-caste marriages and those between the local people and new entrants in the social set-up were no doubt confined to the level of regality, and was more an exception rather than a rule. Thus we find Harsha, a Vaisya, giving his daughter in marriage to Dhrubhata, a Kshatriya, and his sister Rajyasri being married in the Kshatriya Maukhari family. Even Brahmins occasionally took Kshatriya or Vaisya wives without loss of caste, as for instance, a Brahmin Ravikirti had married Bhanugupta, a Vaisya, and they had three sons, one of whom Abhayadatta was a Viceroy of Emperor Yasodharman; so also Hastiboja had a Brahmin father and a Kshatriya mother. His step brothers from Brahmin mother applied themselves to the study of the Vedas. The Kshatriya nomenclature, however, was supposed to include all those who were originally Kshatriyas, as also those new entrants who were placed in this group. The late Bombay Scholar C.V. Vaidya summarising the position in the post-Harsha period points out that 'the Kshatriyas had not yet divided themselves into Rajputs and Khatris'. He uses the term Khatri specifically. The Kshatriyas had not yet been divided into 36 families and none of the names of these 36 families had come into existence. The Chauhanas and the Solankis, the Sisodiyas and the Rathors had yet to be born, and the Kshatriyas of India then formed one undivided caste without probably any restriction of marriage

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in particular families. Caste was, in fact, somewhat loose as Kshatriyas freely married Vaisya wives from great families which had raised themselves to kingly status. The Suryavamsa, the Chandravamsa and the Agnivamsa are not yet met in the grants and inscriptions of the period. The Kshatriyas have their peculiar epithets like *Varman* and *Trata* or *Sena* and *Bhata*. *Sinha* or *Singh* usually noticed in the post-Mohammedan period, is not traceable in the records of the seventh century A.D.

The Arab historians recording the conditions of India provide some interesting information about the position of the castes which could be relevant in the present context. Ibn Khurdadba, who wrote his account sometime about A.D. 900, mentions the division of Indian society into seven castes—the foremost being the *Sabkufria*—the men of high caste from whom kings are chosen. The people of other class do homage to this class only. The second class is called *Kataria*. From this account it appears that the Kshatriyas class had split up into Sabkufria or the Satkshatriyas constituting the ruling landed aristocracy, and the ordinary Kshatriyas—called Katarias, who were not connected with the regality but still followed the profession of arms and were Kshatriyas by birth. The *Parasara Smriti* recommends agriculture also for the common Kshatriyas (*Yadav* p. 11). The legitimacy for following the function of Vaisyas by Kshatriyas is given by Kulluka Bhatta (between 1150 and 1300 A.D.) who in the context of *apaddharma*—adversity—simply states: *Vaisyape-Kshatriya-dharman*—(on *Manu*. VII. 2).

Khatris and Neo-Kshatriyas or Rajputs

It is in this context that the position of the Khatris is to be recorded in the medieval period—roughly between 1000-1800 A.D.). The paucity of evidence need not stand in the way of analysis of the available data. It may be proposed that the term Khatri corresponds to Sanskrit Kshatriya being its Prakrit derivative while the term Rajputs or Rajaputras constitute the new class of foreigners who after purification were recognized as Kshatriyas. The Agnikula tradition is a pointer in this direction. The Ahar inscription (A.D. 904) from Bulandsahr district used the form Kshatraya (क्षत्रय) in place of Kshatriya, while the Ghatiyala record (A.D. 918) has the term *Prakriti* for the

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Kshatriyas. Another term *Brahma*-Kshatriya is recorded in the inscriptions of Vijayasena and Lakshmana Sena respectively. The former refers to Samantasena, the head garland of the clan of Brahma-Kshatriyas, and was found at Deopara in the Rajashahi district of Bengal. Lakshamana Sena is describe l in the second inscription as the best of the Brahma-Kshatriyas. The Prithviraja Raso of Chandrabaradai notices several forms—*Chatriya* (छत्रिय), *Chatri* and *Khatri*. The most important reference in this work is to a Khatri named Bhima who entertained the poet at his house in Ghazni, where he stayed. The association of Khatris with Afghanistan was fairly strong in the Medieval period and many Khatris later on accompanied Baber in his Indian campaign.

Another term *Thakura* is recorded in the Ladnu inscription of Sadharana of Vikrama Samvat 1373=1316 A.D. This record was found 20 miles north-west of Didwana, in the old Jodhpur State. In this record there is a reference to the genealogy of the Mohammadan emperor and praise is showered on Alauddin, conqueror of south India. In verse 13, a person named Sadharan, lord of Pura, is called a favourite of the Emperor and on account of his merit, he became his treasurer—the Chancellor of the Exchequor. It is interesting to find reference to the *gotra*—Srimad of the Kshatriya Sadharan. According to Bhandarkar who edited this record, Sadharan was a Khatri by caste and not Rajput because firstly, Brahmanic gotras are as a rule not specified by Rajput families. Secondly, if he had been a Rajput, his sect such as Chahamana, Paramara and so forth would certainly have been mentioned. Thirdly Sadharan was the treasurer of the Emperor Alauddin (V. 13) which office is never held by the Rajputs. Fourthly, during the reign of the Mohammadans, the community of Khatris had attained both name and fame which is very well known fact. The Khatris had taken to service in the military as well as in the civil lines. In verse 13, there occurs a verse *pura-patti*. Sadharan is also called Mahatha in the margin on the left side of the stone which apparently stands for *maha thakkura*. As the lord of a village, he is called a Thakur or a guardian. Moreover, as pointed out by Bhandarkar, the Khatris still now use the word *Thakur* when writing to their *Samadhis*—fathers of their children-in-law. This inscription is very important for

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assessing the position of the Khatris in the time of Ala-ud-din Khilji. They are called Kshatriyas as also Thakurs and *Mahatas*—a title still held by the Khatris.

Khatris in Civil and Military Positions

The association of the Khatris in civil and military matters continues in later times as well. It is evident from the reference to the southern campaign of Ala-ud-din in Ladnu record of Sadharan the State Chancellor that he had full information about the campaign and he might have been a participant as well. It is, however, evident from later references that in the Vijayanagar kingdom one day in May or June 1360, the Hindu bankers and money-changers who had disregarded repeated warnings regarding use of gold coins of Muhammad I of the Bahmani dynasty, were by royal decree put to death and their place was taken by Hindus of the Khatri caste of Northern India who had accompanied the various armies which had invaded the Deccan. They enjoyed a monopoly of the business of banking and money-changing. Until, in the reign of Feroz Shah Bahmani (1397-1422) the descendants of the slaughtered men were permitted, on payment of a large sum of money, to resume the business of their forefathers (CHI. III. p. 378). It thus appears that the movement of the Khatris from North to South and from West to East as also from North to West was quite a regular feature for administrative, military and economic reasons. The Khatris continued to play an interesting and active role in the political and economic life of the country between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries A.D. as might be evident from their participation in civil administration under the Saiyyads.

Khatris under the Saiyyads

The Khatris seem to have played an active role as administrators as also in the political life during the period of the Saiyyads of Delhi. (A.D. 1414-51). Three prominent Khatri's names appear in the *Tawarikh-i-Mubarakshah*. These are Sidharan, Sindhupala and Kaju Khatri. Mubarakshah patronised the Khatris of Delhi although some of them are supposed to join the plot against his life. (*Delhi Sultanate* p. 134). It is said that on February 10, 1434, while Mubarak Shah (A.D. 1421-34) was

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saying his prayers at Mubarakabad, founded by him, Miran Sadr, in collusion with Sidharan who was posted at the gate; and Sidhu Pal, got the Saiyad ruler murdered. In this palace coup the two Khatris seem to have played a secondary role. Sidharan, Sindhupala and their relations who were associated in the murder of the late king were rewarded with the grant of fiefs of Bayana, Amroha, Narnaul and Guhram and some other districts in the Doab. This might be taken as fair in the game of politics and diplomacy which knows no permanent friends but only permanent interests. Both Sidharan and Sindhupala had to pay for their acts of commissions and omissions. Sidharan aligned himself along with his forces with Kamal-ud-din. Both of them finally lost their lives. Sidharan was caught and put to death, while Sindhupala immolated himself along with his family. Some Khatris are said to have joined hands with the Khokhars led by Jasratha. According to the *Rajatarangini*, Jasaratha had also joined hands with Zain-ul-Abdin of Kashmir against the ruler of Jammu Raja Bhim who had all along supported the Sultans of Delhi. Jonaraja, the author of the Kashmir chronicle also informs the shelter provided to Jasrath when he was hard pressed by the lord of Delhi (V. 100). In this power struggle in Northern India, some Khatris are said to have joined the Khokhrans led by Jasrath and that accounts for the descendants of such Khatris being called Khukranis. On the other hand, there were also those Khatris of Delhi who were interested in the Delhi Sultanate administration. One such person was the Chief Minister Sarvar-ul-mulk, originally Malik Sarup whose chief accomplices were Kanku and Raju Khatri who had enjoyed royal favour for long, and Miran Sadr. The division of political forces into Pro-Sultan and Pro-Jasarath with Khatris playing only a secondary role might have had its impact in social contacts and marital relationship. That could explain why the Khukhrain formed a group by themselves consisting of nine sub-castes: Chaddha, Saini or Sainani, Indi or Anand, Bhasein or Bhasin, Suri, Kohli, Sethi, Kri and Sabbharwal (Seth p. 215-16). Ganesh Das in his book *Char Bagh-i-Panjab* describing the social condition of the Punjab in the early nineteenth century refers to a Khokhar Khatri named Pindi Das (p. 110) the best known among the eminent men and Sahukaras of the town of Shaikhu-

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pura, earlier called Jahangirabad.

The Khatris continued in administrative service under the Lodis. Some Khatri names figure in the *Char-Bagh* of Ganesh Das, In his time, Bahlolpur, founded by Bahlol Lodi in Hijri 860=A.D. 1439 was the property of the Khatris of the Badera sub-caste. According to the author Ganesh Das Khatris at one time among the ruling caste of Hind had come to Punjab as immigrants, and after settling down were absorbed in service or took to trade. This situation might have occurred after the murder of Mubarakshah of Delhi, compelling the important Khatris to migrate to Punjab and settle down in different vocations. There are references to many persons living in the city of Gujarat in Punjab whose ancestors had come from a place Sadhri. There is also a reference to Puri Khatris as proprietors of Ghartal-Khasa in the time of Sultan Ibrahim, The grandson of Bahlol Lodi. (op. cit. p. 80).

Khatris under the Mughals

During the time of Babur, the Khatris from Afghanistan are said to have formed part of his retinue. Raizada Uggar Sen, a Nanda Khatri had come to Lahore with the Mughal ruler. His sons Raizada Lakhu and Raizada Bhaire were appointed in administrative service as quanungo to the pargana of Eminabad. They settled down and prospered both in wealth and children. The participation of Khatris at the higher level of administration under the Mughals begins with Todarmal who had administrative experience under Sher Shah. A fuller account of Todarmal and other Khatris in Mughal administration would follow subsequently. As regards the Khatri officials in the Punjab, Ganesh Das refers to the administrators of Gujrat from the reign of Emperor Jalaluddin Akbar beginning with the year A.H. 997+570=1567 A.D. These included Kabir Das Khatri who was administrator of the Chakla of Sailkot for 10 years. During the reign of Emperor Nuruddin Jahangir there were three Khatri administrators of this place. Harbans Raj Khatri (6 years), Anant Rai Khatri (5 years) and Takht Mal Khatri (4 years). Chandra Sen Khatri was the administrator of this place for 5 years under Shahjahan (9 years). Jadu Rai Khatri was its head for 5 years in the time of Aurangzeb Alamgir. Under the Later Mughals—Muhammad Shah and

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his son Ahmed Shah, Daya Ram, Kirpa Ram and Dinanath Rai Khatri were in charge of it. It is interesting to find a Puri Khatri—Rai Atma Ram as its administrator during the reign of Ahmad Shah Durrani—when it was part of the Afghan empire. The list includes names of many Khatris under Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

Todar Mal

Todar Mal symbolises the triumph of a youngman beginning at the lowest rung of the administrative hierarchy as a writer and finally ending as a mansabdar of 4000, the highest for a Hindu. A celebrated financier and administrator, Raja Todar Mal distinguished himself at several fronts. At the time of his death (November 10, 1599 A.D.), he was *Vakilus-Sultanat* and *Mushrif-i-Diwan* of the entire empire including provinces of Kabul and Kandhar. The information about his career and achievements is available from *Tabakat-i-Akbari* of Nizamuddin Ahmad Bakshi, as also from the *Ayeen-i-Akbari* of Abul-Fazal. He was earlier in the service of Sher Shah and was charged with the erection of the Fort Rohtas. His career under the Mughal ruler Akbar is symbolical of the Khatri skill and valour which he displayed both at the war fronts as also in civil matters as a Diwan of the emperor. His valiant character was displayed despite heavy odds against the disruptive political forces in the country, in Avadh, Bihar, Bengal, Orissa and Gujarat, and against the turbulent Uzbegs and Yusufzais. He was honoured by the Emperor with the gift of one of his pens and swords. In appreciation of his services he was appointed Diwan and was charged to look after the revenue and civil matters of the Mughal empire. His scheme of classification of land, its settlement and assessment patterns eventually became the basis for the land revenue policy evolved under the British company's rule. In the words of Monstuart Elphinstone, the classification and measurements of Raja Todar Mal have been the basis of all subsequent adjustments of the land revenue and, in fact, form the basis of a clear and intelligible system. The subsequent settlements under the British rule have for their basis the measurements and calculations sketched and in a great part enforced by Raja Todar Mal. In the evening of his life, Todar Mal was sent to retrieve the situation created by

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the Yusufzais at the North West Frontier. He established fortified posts throughout the Yusufzai country. Old and worn out, Todar Mal died on November 20, 1589.

Raja Todar Mal was deeply religious and would not miss his morning puja, and according to Abul Fazl, 'he would neither eat, sleep nor work until he could perform his devotions after his rule'. A stone bearing an inscription in Draupadikund near Shivapuri in Varanasi, records the repair of the Kund (Pandava-mandapa) in Samvat 1646 (1589) by Raja Todar Mal, the minister of the Emperor Akbar and the ornament of the Tandon family. This tank was thus repaired shortly before his death. According to Abul-Fazl, once again, that 'for honesty, rectitude, manliness, knowledge of business and administrative ability, Raja Todar Mal was without a rival in Hindustan'.

Todarmal's two sons Dharu Tandon and Govardhandhari Tandon also rendered military service under the Mughals. Dharu was a commander in the army of Akbar and fought most bravely in the conquest of Tatta in Sind. According to the *Tabakat-i-Akbari* of Nizamuddin, Raja Todar Mal's son Dharu fought most bravely, and was killed in the battle against Janibeg who finally fled from the battle field. He was a commander of 700 and had joined the Imperial force led by Khankhanan. The other son Govardhan figures in a Sanskrit drama *Kansabadha* which was performed at Varanasi under his patronage. His association as son of Todar Mal with the Mughal Court is also hinted at in *Wakiat-i-Jahangiri* or Memoirs of Jahangir. (Tandon p. 47).

Raja Bikramajit Hardas Rai

Another Khatri who distinguished himself at the battle front as also in civil administration was Haridas Rai who was a *Rai Rayan*—a revenue official under Akbar. He was later on honoured with the title of Raja Bikramajit—an insignia of highest distinction conferred on him by Jahangir, as recorded in his Memoirs (*Wakiat-i-Jahangiri* or *Jahangirnama*). He was made commandant of artillery with direction to keep 50,000 gunners and 3000 gun-carriages always in a state of readiness. Bikramajit is described as a Khatri in this work. In Akbar's time he was examiner of the expenditure on elephants and was afterwards raised to the exalted grade of Diwan and enrolled among

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the nobles of the court. Jahangir compliments him as not wanting in gallantry and judgement. The Raja had to his credit the conquest of Kangra as also the tribes of Jam and Bhara. Raja Bikramjit with a stout heart, experienced judgement, loyal intentions, pure friendship and great precaution, was also a good commander. He led Mughal forces against Surajmal in AH. 1027+570=1597 and eventually wrested the territory of Kangra and Chamba. Bikramajit was a Mansabdar of 5000—the highest honour for a Hindu at that time. Two other Khatris Diwan Mohan Das and Kishan Das were the *Mukhtar-i-Kans* of Jahangir.

In the time of Shah Jahan a Khatri named Jaswant was appointed *diwan-i-tan*. The main function of this office is well defined by the Mughal emperor in his behest to this official Jaswant Khatri. In his words, 'You should be a trusted judge between us and those who are being assigned Jagirs' (Quraishi, p. 75). This diwanship was one of the most important office—a pillar of the State, and the appointment of a Khatri to this August office was in the best tradition of devotion and loyalty to the State and the emperor—set up earlier by Raja Todar Mal and Raja Bikramajit—formerly Haridas or Patridas. In Shah Jahan's time, another Khatri Sundar Das received the title of *raja* and he looked after the affairs of the empire. The Khatris were also employed by the Subedars, Faujdars, high nobles and administrators. They used to receive high titles and positions like *rajgi*, *diwani*, *bakshigari* and *faujdari* (Ganesh Das p. 123).

The faith in the administrative competence of the Khatris at the top post of *diwan* seems to have waved in the time of Aurangzeb who did not have any Khatri diwan or any administrative Khatri head in civil or military department. At best there might have been Khatri officials incharge of revenue matters in case Rasik Das to whom he wrote letters highlighting his views and policy in this direction, is taken a Khatri. The information about his caste is not available. Some references to Khatri officials and commanders are traceable under the Later Mughals. The two Khatri diwans of the Saiyad brothers Husain Ali and Abdullah who were virtually king makers are recorded in *Muntakhabu-l-Lubab* of Muhammad Hashim Khafi Khan (Khafi Khan), a man of good family of

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Delhi. His account commences with the invasion of Babur, A.D. 1519, and concludes with the fourteenth year of Muhammad Shah. He mentions the role of Raja Muhakham Singh, diwan of Husain Ali who took part in the campaign against Satara in 1717 A.D. and Raja Ratan Chand who was diwan of Abdullah. The authority of Raja Ratan Chand extended over all civil, revenue and legal matters, including the appointment of Kazis. He was also instrumental in getting the *jiziya*—tax on Hindus abolished. Both the Khatri diwans also headed military excursions against the insurgents (Eliot. Vol. VII. 447, 486-7 etc.). Another prominent Khatri administrator was Raja Ayamal and his brothers Siva Das and Nand Ram who were associated with the Rajput Houses of Jaipur and Udaipur. Ayamal equally played an effective role in Rajput-Maratha relations. Several other Khatris were associated with local States in the eighteenth century.

Khatris in Local Administration in Punjab

The importance of the community and its members in the administration of revenue—its collection and maintenance of accounts—is recorded by Ganesh Das in his work *Char Bagh-i-Punjab*. The administration of Gujarat from Akbar's time on wards included many Khatris, Kabir Das under Akbar for 10 years, Harbans Rai (6 years), Anant Ram (5 years) and Takht Mal (4 years). Under Jehangir: Chandra Sen (9 years); under Shah Jehan, Jadu Rai (5 years); under Aurangzeb, Rai Har Saran Das (4 years); under Farukh Siyar, Rai Gurdit Mal (7 years), and under Muhammad Shah and his son Ahmad Shah—Daya Ram, Kirpa Ram and Dina Nath Khatri (1 year each). In subsequent times during the reign of Ahmad Shah Durrani, Rai Atma Ram Puri was administering this place for 2 years. Even under local rulers like Sirdar Gujjar Singh and Sardar Sahib Singh, Diwan Sobha Ram Handa, Diwan Sardha Ram and Diwan Mohkam Chand Khatri are recorded as administering Gujrat. Several Khatris distinguished themselves in the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and till the end of the rule of Maharaja Dalip Singh. These included Sube Singh, of the Main sub-caste, Dewan Ganga Ram, Lala Devi Sahai Khanna, Lala Kanhya Lal Duggal and Govind Das Khatri. There might have been a few more whose Khatri caste is not recorded. All these

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persons distinguished themselves as the administrators of Gujarat.

Many Khatri families held the office of Qanungo and were also Zamindars in Punjab under the Sultanate as well as under the Mughals. Ganesh Das, the author of *Char-Bagh* introduces himself as a Khatri of Badhera Sub-caste, and a qanungo of the pargana of Gujarat and a Zamindar of that town. The founder of this family line, Kaka Mal, had immigrated from Pattan in Gujarat Dakhhan to serve in the civil administration of Sialkot first under Biram Dev of Jammu, and later on under Sikandar Lodi. His sons were given the *qanungoi* and *Sarishta-dari* of the pargana of Sialkot by Islam Shah. The fifth in descent Shankar Das was patronised by Jahangir and his younger brother was a *mansabdar* while the eldest one Murar Das was the diwan of Raja Man Singh of his Jagir in Sialkot. The great grandsons were given a share in the quanungoi of the pargana of Bahlolpur. Ganesh Das's grandfather Bhagwan Das was a *rais* of Gujarat to whom Nadir Shah had addressed a *firman*. His father Shiva Dayal was the *amil* and *nazim* of Fatehgarh in the pargana of Gujarat. Ganesh Das refers to hereditary *quanungos* (p. 27), Ghais in Rohtas, Badhera in Bahlolpur, Sialkot and Gujarat, Sobtis in Jalalpur, Sahnis in Wazirabad, Nandas in Eminabad, Chopra in Lahore, Puris in Batala, Tulis in Kalanaur, Bedi and Mehtas in Patli and Sehgals and Thapars in Jalandhar. It is recorded by Ganesh Das that when the rulers of the Ghurs, the Lodhi and the Chughtai dynasties decided to populate the country and relented towards the people not belonging to their own religion. Many of the Khatris gradually settled down in cities and large villages. In the beginning, they did not accept service or high position and took to the professions of trade, shop-keeping, drapery, *sarrafi*, trade in silken and embroidered and other cloth. Later on learning Persian, the reputation of the Khatris increased and several of them attained to the position of *Wazarat* and *diwani*. Many were appointed for service to the office of *qanungoi*, *chaudharai*, *amini*, *faujdari*, *girdwari*, *tahsildari*, *Sarishtadari*, *bakshigari*, *sardaftri* and *munshigiri* (p. 130-131).

The Khatris made their fortune as officials of the government and as traders, sahukaras, and businessmen. They often invested their savings in landed properties. Thus, the village of

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Bath in the pargana of Gujarat was purchased by Wadhawan Khatris in the reign of Farrukh Siyar. Many Khatri families held land in proprietory right. Thus, the Sobti Khatri held the town of Jalalpur Sobtian, the Handas held the zemindari of Daulatanagar, Duggals had the villages of Alimgirapur, Bhallas that of Karianwala, Baderas in Gujarat and Herat, Mehras in Takht Hazara, and Nayyars held the land of the town of Kunja while the village of Ghartal Khasa was in the proprietory possession of Puri Khatris.

Khatris in Trade and Commerce

The recruitment of Khatris in the service of the ruler and the nobility dating back to the Sultanate time had not in any way handicapped the display of their talents in the areas of trade and commerce. They took to mercantile activities on a big scale. Writing in 1643, Manrique testifies to the enormous wealth possessed by the Khatri traders of Northern India (Ward and Hosten (1927), Vol. II. p. 156). By the end of the 17th century, a large number of Khatri families had settled in places like Ahmedabad and Surat which were the important commercial centres in Gujarat. The Khatris there took to trade as well as accountancy. Amongst these people a considerable degree of caste solidarity existed. On September 16, 1725, Itimad Ali Khan records the razing by Hamid Ali Khan's order of forty houses at Ahmedabad belonging to rich Khatris. Ten months later on July 15, 1726, the *Mutsaddi* of Surat sent his men to arrest Krishan Das Bhatia, the diwan of a deceased noble. Failing to apprehend Krishan Das, they took into custody one of his neighbours. This greatly provoked the Khatris who came out to resist the troops. Armed clashes ensued, leading to the suspension of business in the whole town. The situation, however, returned to normal after Krishna Das agreed to meet the *Mutsaddi* personally.

The *Miratu-l-Haqaiq* mentions a number of Sarafs of Ahmedabad and Surat serving as *diwans* or *khazanedars*—treasurers in the royal establishments as well as in the *sarkars* of the nobles at Delhi. An interesting case is that of Banarsi Das who towards November 1726 was working at the camp as *Wakil* while his son Bhukandas looked after his family business at Surat. The movement of whole community or class of mer-

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chants and traders from one part of the country to another was a normal feature. The existence of considerable population of Khatri traders at Surat is an evidence on this point. They may have come to Gujarat from Punjab and the Gangetic Plains during the 16th and 17th centuries. Besides Khatris there are also allusions in the *Miratu-l-Haqaiq* to colonies of Kashmiri and Central Asian traders at Surat. The movement of Khatri traders towards the east is inferred from the account of Manrique (I. 44). He mentions that Khatri merchants of Dacca possessed such quantities of money that being difficult to count, it used commonly to be weighed. In Delhi too the position was similar. Houses of merchants had such vast sums of money piled up that if they had been covered up they would have struck the ordinary gaze as being heaps of grain rather than piles of anything so very unusual.

The movement of Khatris from Punjab towards the east as also in other directions is accepted and well-recognised. The Khatri traders moved out mostly for trade and commerce, but there were several instances duly recorded of Khatris being sent for administrative purposes. About 1500 A.D. a batch of Khatris came from Peshawar and Multan and settled in Saharanpur (Eliot: *The Races of India*, p. 294). So also at Aligarh, the Khatris came there from Punjab sometime earlier. At Etawah about 1500 A.D.—one Motumal Khatri of Jalaun settled in the old city along with a number of relations and kinsmen. In 1637, Abu Ram, a Kapoor of Kotli in Lahore, migrated to Burdwan and was appointed the Faujdar of Chakla Burdwan. In Avadh, Seth Ram Chand who held a high command in the army of Delhi, came from there to Oudh in 1720 with Sadat Ali Khan. The Khatris of Bengal trace their origin to Punjab and the main body of them, according to Risley (p. 482) is said to have emigrated from there in the reign of Aurangzeb. The majority of the people came as traders and subsequently became zemindars and tenure-holders, though they never touched the plough but hired labourers to cultivate their lands. The prosperity of the Khatri traders of Dacca noticed by Mainrique, has been recorded earlier.

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Khatri Religious Teachers—Nanak

Among the galaxy of religious teachers and reformers in the Medieval period, the foremost is Nanak, a Khatri of Talwandi in the Lahore district—born in 1469 and died in 1538 or 1539 A.D. He belonged to the family of Bedis. Nanak is reported to have been from his childhood inclined to devotion, and rather indifference to worldly matters. He easily parted with the money given to him by his father for making some purchases, to some religious mendicants who were suffering for want of food. He was interested in the gain that was eternal and not the transitional one. Kallu, his father, was obliged to treat his son with forbearance, still hoping to detach him from his unprofitable abstractions. In order to divert his attention to worldly occupations he sent him to his son-in-law Jairam residing in Sultanpur in the district of Jalandhar. At that time Nanak was a married person with two sons Srichand and Lakshmi Das. Leaving his family at his in-laws place in Batala, Nanak joined his brother-in-law who was employed in the Commissariat of Nawab Daulatkhan. He obtained employment in Government service as storekeeper. He was devoted to his duties and his honesty was fully recognised. He spent only a part of his earnings on himself and the rest he gave in God's name. One fine morning after his usual bath in the river, he attended to his duties. As he was engaged in weighing out provisions, he came to number 13, which in Punjabi is *tera*. He paused and muttered 'Tera' which has the meaning also of 'Thine' i.e. 'I am thine'. This is quite in accord with the Hindu mind. In so doing he over weighed the provisions. His enemies accused him of squandering the government money. The balance of accounts through Divine Grace, however, proved his honesty, but the annoying experience of suffering at the instance of detractors forced him to give up his job as also worldly activities. He became an itinerant land preacher and was accompanied by his musician Mardana who played the *rabab*—a violin type musical instrument. Nanak travelled east, south, north and west. He is said to have travelled into various countries and wherever he went, he preached and explained to all types of people the doctrine of the unity and omnipresence of God, defending his own views without disparaging those of others. 'Put an armour', says Guru Nanak, 'that will harm no

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one; let they coat of mail be that of understanding, and convert thy enemies to friends. Fight with valour but with no weapon, except the word of God'.

Nanak professed himself the enemy of discord, and to have no other object than that of reconciling the two seemingly hostile religious forces—Hinduism and Islam—in one religion. This he endeavoured to do by recalling them to that great and original truth—that God is ONE. He is Sat (truth and reality as opposed to *asat* (falsehood) and *mithya* (illusion). God is the only One, Omnipotent, and Omniscient Reality. His power cannot be defined and He is *nirankara*—formless. He is called by different names, but He is the *Sat Kartar*—True Creator and *Sat Nam*—True Name. He is therefore equated with the abstract principle of truth. The Guru or the spiritual mentor is the guide who could be consulted for fear of being strayed from the prescribed path of living, but the Guru is no substitute for God. He is only the Captain to steer the ship of mankind across the seemingly shoreless ocean of life. Nanak therefore accepts for him only the status of a teacher and not that of a Prophet, and constantly refers to himself as the servant of God. His religion is for the householders (*grihasthas*) and he strongly disapproves of monastic set up or practice of austerities. He therefore lays emphasis on the cult of *bhakti* or devotion—the worship of *Nama* (*Namamarga*). In his words:

'As hands or feet besmirched with shine
Water washes white,
As garments dark with grime,
Ruised with soap are made light;
So when Sin soils the Soul,
Thy Name alone shall make it whole.
Words do not the Saint or Sinner make
Action alone is written in the book of fate.
What we saw that alone we take
O Nanak, be saved or for ever transmigrate.'

('*Japji*'—Translation Khuswant Singh)

Nanak believed in the triumph of human will over fate and destiny. All human beings are basically good, but they are as ignorant as the deer is of the aromatic *kasturi* in its navel. The

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task of the Guru is to enlighten mankind of the eternal treasure of goodness within them and help them in opening the jewel box that lies closed within. Nanak summed up his message in three commandments: *Kirti karo, nam japo* and *vand cako*—Work, worship and give in charity. Virtues and charities, heroic acts and collected wisdom, however, are nought of themselves; the only knowledge which is to be availed of is the knowledge of God. They alone can find the Lord on whom the Lord looks with favour. 'Life', says Nanak, 'is as the shadow of the passing bird, but the soul of man is, as the potter's wheel, ever circling on its pivot'.

During his travels in the year 1526, Nanak was introduced to the Mughal emperor Babar, before whom he maintained his religious views with firmness and eloquence. Pleased with his meeting Babar is said to have offered him an ample maintenance which Nanak refused as he trusted only HIM who provided for all and from whom alone a man of religion and virtue should accept favour or reward. Nanak's last years were spent at Kartarpur where he preached to large crowds, charged with a strict daily routine and disciplined life early in the morning after a bath in cold water, and again in the evening for congregational prayers and hymn-singing, followed by a common dinner—*langar*—at the temple. After short prayer people left for their houses. Among the disciples, greatly attached to the Guru at Kartarpur was one Lehna, a Khatri of the Trehan subcaste who impressed Nanak most by his devotion and other qualities. Nanak's elder son Sri Chand had become an ascetic and the other Lakshmi Das showed no interest in spiritual matters. As such, Nanak chose Lehna to carry on his mission under the name Angad (of my own limb). Nanak died on September 22, 1539 in the early hours of the morning—*amrit-bela* leaving the flowers on his body to be shared by the Hindus and the Muslims—the body itself having vanished under the shroud. Thus, ended the life story of this great Khatri religious leader, not a Prophet in his own words but a servant of God. He is remembered as the king of Holy men, the Guru of the Hindus, and the Pir of the Musalmans. *Baba Nanak Sah Fakir, Hindu ka Guru, musalman ka pir.*

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Angad and his Successors

The line of Khatri Sikh Gurus continues from Angad onwards. Guru Angad whom Nanak personally chose as his successor in preference to his elder son Lakshmi Chand was Guru for thirteen years (1539-1552). He was a Tirhan Khatri and married with children. By his tact and humility he could prevent dissention among the Sikhs. Sri Chand had some followers who came to be known as Udasis. Angad also opened more religious centres and organised a regular system of collective offerings to meet their expenses. He is equally noted for evolving a new script in which Nanak's hymns (*Sakhis*) were written. The script came to be known as *Gurmukhi*—having thirty-five letters taken from other current north Indian scripts—originally from Brahmi written from left to right. Angad's compilation of which copies were supplied to other religious centres, became the nucleus of the Sacred Writings of the Sikhs—later known as *Guru Granth Saheb*. Angad had two sons, but like his predecessor he chose some able disciple as his successor, namely a seventy three year old Amar Das, a Khatri of the Bhalla sub-caste to succeed him as the third guru.

Amar Das

The third Guru was the head of the Sikh Church for 22 years from 1552-1574. He carried his predecessor's mission with full zeal and made *langar*—the community meal—an integral part of the Sikh church. Govindwal in the Amritsar district, his homeland grew into an important town. Akbar visited him and assigned the revenues of several villages to the Guru's daughter Bhani, as a marriage gift. He increased the number of parishes or *manjis* and also appointed agents (*masands*) for organising worship and collecting offerings. More copies were made of the hymns of Nanak and Angad with admixture of the new Guru's compositions as also those of Hindu Bhaktas. His contribution during his twenty-two years ministry were manifold, including innovation in prayers on festive occasions, advancement of monogamy and widow remarriage as also banning of the practice of Sati. His sermons were simple and direct, stressing the human side with the welfare of mankind as the prime consideration. Living till the age of ninety-five he finally chose his son-in-law Ram Das, a Khatri of the Sodhi

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sub-caste who had been living with him, as his successor.

Ram Das

The stewardship of this Sikh Guru was for a period of seven years (1574-1581). This time was utilised in building activities. He had a tank dug at the site granted to his wife by Emperor Akbar. He moved from Govindwal to the neighbourhood of the tank and started building a town around it which came to be known as *Guru-Ka-Chak*, *Chak-Ram Das* or *Ram Das-Pura*. He was the founder of the Har Mandir or Golden Temple at Amritsar. Traders were invited to set up their business in the new town and this step was helpful in augmenting the finances of the Sikh Church and was equally helpful in expanding missionary activities. Ram Das also composed hymns (Sakhis) which were later on incorporated in the sacred writings. Ram Das chose his youngest son Arjun as his successor.

Guru Arjun (A.D. 1581-1606)

The twenty five years period of Guru Arjun's headship was surcharged with tension and full of pit falls. His father Ram Das had expressed the hope that 'As one lamp is lighted from another, so the Guru's spirit will pass into him and will dispel the darkness in the world'. The new Guru was also the compiler of the *Adigrantha*. He also completed the building of a temple in Cak Ram Das and invited the Muslim Divine, Mian Mir of Lahore to lay the foundation stone of the Harimandir, the temple of God which was open on all sides, and to all who intend entering it with a humble spirit. After the completion of the temple and the tank filled with water, it was named *Amrit-sarovar* (the pool of nectar). In his time another tank was dug at Taran Taran (pool of salvation) eleven miles south of Amritsar, and raised a third town of Kartarpur. Hargobindpur, named after his son, was built on the bank of the river Beas. In August 1604, the holy Grantha was completed and was formally installed in the temple at Amritsar with Bhai Buddha appointed as the first reader or *granthi*. The *Granth* became the most powerful factor in spreading the teachings of the gurus among the masses. In Guru Arjun's words—'In this vessel you will find three things—truth, peace and contemplation; in this too, the nectar that is the

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uplifter of all mankind'. The Guru enjoyed the patronage and favour of the Mughal emperor Akbar, but Jahangir found an excuse 'to put an end to the false traffic', as he records in his 'Diary'. The supposed assistance in the form of blessings given by the Guru to the rebellious prince Khusrau was considered enough for the imposition of a heavy fine. Failure to admit his supposed guilt cost the Guru his life in a very tragic manner. Thus, ended the career of the fifth Guru—a Khatri addressed by his devotees as the *Sacha Padshah* (the true emperor). An unusually gifted and a prolific writer, his *Sukhmani* (the Psalm of Peace) carries his message which could be accepted by the humanity at large. 'Of all the creeds the sovereign creed is to pray to God and to a goodly deed'. (Singh p. 61). Arjuna was the embodiment of national unity who brought the Hindus, Muslims together by representing the best of both the religions in the *Adi Granth* and in raising the Great temple Harimandir whose four doors were open to all. The seed sown by Nanak had blossomed in full.

Har Govind

The eleven year old son of the Guru named Har Govind was installed as the Sixth Guru in May 1606 and he remained the Head of the Sikh Church for 38 years. The young Har Govind was guided by the two veterans, Bhai Buddha and Guru Das. His two swords girdled round his waist symbolised his spiritual and temporal powers; the rosary was the sword-belt and his turban the emblem of royalty. From his time a trained body of soldiers were inducted into the Sikh Church and a small fort Lohgarh was built in Amritsar. Across the Harmandir was built the *Akal Takht* (the Throne of the timeless God). Hargovind consolidated temporal and spiritual hold over the Sikh community and recruitment of a private army enraged the Mughal ruler and the Guru was imprisoned for a year in Gwalior for failure to pay the fine imposed on his predecessor—father Guru Arjuna. Constant clashes with the Mughal forces compelled the Guru who was released from his captivity after a year to shift his headquarters at Kiratpur, on site gifted by the Raja of Bilaspur—in the Himalayan foothills. Here he spent the rest of his life time. He died peacefully in March 1644.

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Har Rai (1644-1660)

The seventh Guru was the grandson of Hargovind. His father Gurditta had died in 1638. Within a year of his assuming ministry, Har Rai was compelled to leave Kiratpur with his family and retainers, and for the next thirteen years he lived in seclusion in a small village in Sernoor State (Singh p. 671). His seventeen years of ministry were rather uneventful. He had however, to pay for his contacts with Dara, and his son Ram Rai was sent to the Mughal Court to mend matters. Har Rai chose his five year old younger son Har Kishan as his successor, who did not live long and died of small pox in the house of Mirza Raja Jai Singh in Delhi in 1664. He nominated his grand-uncle Tegh Bahadur, son of Guru Har Govind as his successor.

Tegh Bahadur

The eighth Guru was a person of retiring habits. Earlier since the death of his father he lived in wilderness first at Anandpur, five miles north of Kiratpur, and later on at other places, including Patna, where Govind Rai was born on December 26, 1666. The few years of Guru's stewardship of the Sikh Pantha were spent by him in touring the country, inspiring confidence in the non-Muslims—the Hindus and the Sikhs in the wake of Aurangzeb's repressive measures. He was apprehended along with a band of devotees at Agra brought to Delhi and arraigued before the Kazi Court, sentenced to death and executed on November 11, 1675. His head was stolen and cremated by his son Govind Singh, who succeeded his father. He has written an account of his father's martyrdom. The Guru laid down his life for the Hindus' to protect their right to wear their caste-marks and sacred threads; and to help the Saintly he went to the utmost limit. He gave his head but never cried in pain. He suffered martyrdom for the sake of his faith.'

Guru Govind Singh

The last Guru was compelled by circumstances to be militant accepting the challenges of the Mughal emperor. The young Guru and his entourage were shifted from Anandpur further into the mountains at Paonta. Here he had his education in classical languages, Sanskrit and Persian, as also Hindi

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and Punjabi and started composing verses in these languages. His mission in life is described in 'Autobiography' (*Apni-Katha*) forming part of the *Bichitra Natak* (Strange play): 'I came into the world charged with the duty to uphold the right in every place, to destroy sin and evil', reminding one of the famous verse in the Gita (IV. 8). 'For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked, and for the establishment of Dharma, I come into being in every age'. He integrated the Sikh movement which had now and then witnessed distressing and disputing events and forces on the question of headship of the Church. He therefore tried to blend the spiritual and secular functions of the Head by declaring the *Granth* to be the spiritual Guru and the *Pantha* taking care of the secular ones. The Baisakhi function at Anandpur called by the Guru is noted for the institution of *Panj piyare* (five beloved ones)—the five baptised Sikhs forming the nucleus of Khalsa. They were from different castes—a Brahman, a Khatri and three of lesser castes—were made to drink out of one bowl, signifying their initiation into the casteless fraternity of the Khalsa. The Hindu names were changed and they were given one family name 'Singh'. Five emblems were prescribed for the Khalsa—wearing of unshorn hair and beard (*kesa*), carrying a comb (*kangha*), wearing of knee-length pair of breeches (*kacha*) and carrying a steel bracelet (*kara*) on the right wrist, and a sabre (*kirpan*). Several other rules of conduct were equally prescribed for the baptised Sikhs. According to the Sikh Chronicles the baptism of twenty thousand Sikhs at Anandpur was followed by greater activity all over northern India. The Guru dinned into the peasantry of the Punjab, 'the broom of divine knowledge to sweep away the filth of timidity'.

The Young Khatri Martyrs

The history of the Sikh Gurus will not be complete without reference to the two young sons of Guru Govind Singh who preferred to be walled alive rather than give up their religion. Guru Arjun and Guru Tegh Bahadur had suffered painful death and brutal slaughter at the hands of the Mughals, so the two young boys only emulated the examples of their forefathers. A detailed account of the murder of Guru's children is given in Browne's *India Tracts* (II. 6.7). In his *Zafarnama*, the Guru

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writes, 'It matters little if a jackal through cunning and treachery succeeds in killing two lion cubs, for the lion himself lives to inflict retribution on you' (Verse 14, 15). Subsequently in verse 98, the *Zafarnama* mentions the death of all his four children.

Another martyr was Haqiqat Rai, son of Bhagmal Puri, a wealthy Khatri of Sialkot. He was a promising boy of 14 who paid dearly for his conscience. In the *Mushim Maqtab*, his intellectual curiosity was construed as a disrespect to Islam and the Prophet. He was given the alternative of either accepting Islam or facing death. Despite all persuations and allurements, the young boy immortalised himself by giving his life for the sake of his conscience. A small *samadhi* was built over the place of his cremation in Lahore in A.D. 1748. Even a hundred years later, a fair was held on the 5th of every month, and it became a place of pilgrimage.

Other Khatri Teachers

The other Khatri religious teachers enjoying the support of the people with a mission and having a good many followers include one Baba Shahana, a Khatri of Sataghara in the Montgomery district. He lived about 1600 A.D. or so, and his original name was Mihra and his occupation that of boiling gram. He was made a disciple by a Musalman faqir who gave him the title of *Mihr Shah*. He then migrated to Lei in the Dera Ismail Khan district from where he shifted to Kachian, a Khatri village on the river Chenab in the Jhang Tehsil—later on a deserted village. His assumption of the Musalman title *Shah* touched the susceptibilities of the Khatris and so he finally shifted to Gitmala, 12 miles from Jhang. His followers call themselves Shahi and even in the 19th century, the order founded by him did exist at Gitmala with a large building. The votaries used the name of '*Satshah*' in their prayers. (Census Report 1891, Vol. XIX. Punjab Part I, p. 130).

Dial Bhaun

Originally a Khatri cloth seller this Bairagi of the Girot in the Khosah tehsil of Shahpur district, is said to have served Guru Govind Singh. His followers are in reality Ramanandi Bairagis and worshippers of idols. The headquarters of the sect

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were located in the 19th century at Girot where a great festival takes place on the 30th of Chet and 1st of Baisaka every year. The followers are chiefly the Khatris and Aroras of the Shahpur district and their tenants are those of the Vaishnava Hindus. They are taught special prayers. Some put on sacred thread while others don't. (*Census of India*, 1891, Vol. XIX. Pt. I, p. 127).

Shamji

Sham Das was a Khatri, a resident of Dipalpur and at the age of 12 he went to Brindaban and became a disciple of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. The Gosain incharge Dwarka Das gave him his blessings, and he became endowed with miraculous powers. It is said that in Samvat 1600 (A.D. 1543) the God Krishna presented him with his idols and enjoined him to proceed to Sindh and teach the Hindus there the ceremonies of their religion and make them his disciple, with his words having a speedy effect on them. He accordingly went there and commenced his mission by making two and a half disciples, namely two Khatris and half a Chandia Buloch. He settled down at Mauza Bapilwar Fateh Khan and founded in Dera Ghazi Khan a temple in honour of Krishna as *Navnit-priya*—the lover of butter. This temple is described in the nineties of the last century as the oldest in that part of the country. There were also at that time other temples earlier erected by or in honour of Shamji at Dera Ismail Khan. His followers are derived from three sources—Gandia Jats, Chandia Bulochs and the Khatris under separate names (*ibid.* p. 128).

Maluk Das Khatri

The Malukdasis form a small Vaishnava sect of northern India, being an off shoot of the Ramanandis. Its name is derived from its founder Maluk Das, a trader of Kara Allahabad who lived in the reign of Aurangzeb. There is a shrine as also a monastery of his followers in Kara, his place of birth. The neighbouring village of Sirathu is said to have been granted to him by the Mughal emperor. Like other Ramanandis, the Malukdasis worship the Rama incarnation of Vishnu and carry a streak of red in the sectarian mark on their foreheads. Six other monasteries of the sect are reported in the Gangetic valley

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and another one at Jagannath where he is reported to have died. Maluk Das's poems and works include: *Dasa Ratna*—Ten Jewels, *Bhakta-vatsala* dealing with Krishna's regard for devotees, and *Ratna-bhava*, a dissertation on the soul and God. He is also the reputed author of many well-known detached verse and apothegams—the well-known being—*Ajgar kare na chakri, Panchi kare na kama*; *Dasa Maluka yun kahe ki sab ke data Ram*. "The python doth no service, nor hath the fowl of the air a duty to perform (to earn a living). Quoth Maluk Das, for all doth Rama provide their daily bread'.

Pran Puri

While referring to the contributions of the Khatri Sikh Gurus, and several others—Dial Bhanu and Shamji in Punjab and Maluk Das in Allahabad, an important personality named Pran Puri of Kanauj deserves fuller attention. In May 1792, Jonathan Duncan, who later on became governor of Bombay, met a Sanyasin living at Benaras who had been a great traveller; he had travelled not only in India, Nepal, Tibet, Ceylon and Malaya, but also in the countries of Central and Western Asia, and in Europe as far as Moscow. His urge for travelling was motivated by religious considerations. He visited Hindu Holy Centres to be near the God. Pilgrimage to him meant really detachment from life. He was a native of Kanauj and a Khatri by caste. When he was nine years of age, he secretly withdrew from his father's house and proceeded to Bithur where he became a Sanyasin. This, according to Duncan, was sometime between 1751-52 and 1756. Within this period he came to Allahabad and took to different kinds of austerities as also devotional discipline. During the course of his visit to Baku, Pran Puri saw the famous Five temple—Maha Jwala Mukhi at Baku on the Caspian Sea, under three Indian Sanyasis. This temple did exist till 1866 when it was visited by Colonel Stewart.

Summing-up

The Medieval period of the country's history does provide references to the contribution of the Khatris in the realm of administration at the Centre as also in the Subas and pargana. The Khatri officials from the post of *Diwan* downwards were noted for their devotion to duty and allegiance to person whom

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they served. A solitary instance of the participation of two Khatris—Sidhupal and Sidharam in the palace coup involving the murder of the Saiyad ruler Mubarak Shah—might have been prompted by personal factors for which they had to pay with their lives. By and large, the contributions of the Khatris in administration was commendable. One has only to record the work of Todarmal—who evolved a clear and intelligible system of revenue collection which actually formed the basis of settlement under the Company's rule later on. The Khatris were equally adept in handling military affairs through proper insight, strategy and even by wielding the sword. Todarmal personally retrieved the situation created by the Yusufzais at the North-West Frontier. Todarmal's example was equally emulated by Haridas Rai, a Rai-Rayan, who was conferred the title of Raja Bikramajit by Jahangir. This Khatri Raja with a stout heart, experienced judgement, loyal intentions, pure friendship and great precaution distinguished himself both as a diwan, and also at the military front against the Raja of Kangra and Raja Surajmal Jat. Two other Khatris—Diwan Mohan Das and Kishan Das were conspicuous in the service of Jahangir. Shahjahan too had Khatris at the higher echelon: Jaswant Rai—who was *diwan-i-tan*—, as also Sundar Das, who received the title of Raja. Among the Khatri administrators under the Later Mughals were Muhakham Singh, Ratan Chand both Rajas and Diwans, and Ayamal who was associated with Jaipur and Udaipur. The Khatris were equally appointed in the Subas or provinces and in revenue administration. They were also zemindars. They were equally successful in the areas of trade and commerce. One has only to look to accounts provided by foreign travellers like Manirigue regarding their prosperous business in the city of Dacca at the one end and Surat at the other. They also filled the economic vacuum in the Deccan as bankers and money changers as early as 1360. They had accompanied the early conquerors from the North in their Deccan compaigns. The prosperity of the community traders could be assessed by the fact that the money accumulated by them could only be assessed by weight and not by counting.

With all the achievements in the field of administration as also in business and trade, the Khatris equally contributed in the field of speculation and intellectual acumanship. The role

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played by the Khatri thinkers in Punjab—particularly Guru Nanak and his successors—all Khatri Gurus—is all the more great. Nanak breathed the spirit of Bhaktism in that part of the country and organised a socio-religious revolt which finally culminated in the birth of the Khalsa—a religious force to contain repressive Mughal elements—in the time of Guru Govind Singh. He dimmed into the people of Punjab—the broom of divine knowledge to sweep away the filth of timidity'. This new awakening infused in the masses the spirit of meeting the challenge posed by repressive elements. The Sikhs emerged as a strong politico-religious forces. Khafi Khan refers to the role of the Sikhs and the Khatris of Punjab, joining hands against the Mughals in A.D. 1714 (Eliot and Dowson VII. p. 468).

Besides the Sikh Gurus, there were other Khatri religious thinkers, particularly Dial Bhaun and Shamji in Punjab and Maluk Das in the Kara district of Allahabad as also Pran Puri of Kannauj. They did not initiate any new religion but definitely gave a slant to Bhaktism in their own form and spirit. The history of the Khatris in the centuries following adds another milestone in the long journey of their progress at different fronts—from bureaucracy and military service to trade, commerce and industry, and distinction in the fields of science and learning to sacrifice and privation at the altar of the struggle for freedom. All this forms part of the study in the next Chapter entitled 'Nineteenth Century and after'.

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CHAPTER 5

Khatris in Nineteenth Century and After

The history of the Khatris in the nineteenth century may well be described as a record of conflict between tradition and modernity, conservatism and liberal outlook and finally the challenge from western thinking and Indian response. The Khatris of Northern India were not unaffected by the change brought about by the introduction of English education. The fast declining Mughal empire which had reached its nadir, finally confined to the precincts of old Delhi and the neighbouring areas had no scope for the assimilation, or even for providing opportunity for the Indian middle class in its services. The result was that the focus of attention now shifted from the Centre to the provincial States. The drift had no doubt been even earlier; i however, became more prominent in this period. Khatri administrators and literateurs therefore found. patrons among provincial rulers, like Ranjit Singh and in Hyderabad, Oudh and several other States including the Maratha States of Sindhia and Holkar. The end of the Sikh rule, however, did not mean the complete snapping of Khatri's participation in the administration of the Punjab under the Company and later on under the Crown as well. The fresh air of western thinking and English education was equally enjoyed by the members of the community who distinguished themselves in different areas—administration, education, business, industrial enterprise and public life and institutions. They equally participated in the new socio-religious awakening aiming at regenerating and revitalising Indian Society. The birth of the Indian National Congress and its expanding activities did not leave the community unaffected. The Khatris participated fully in the

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freedom struggle in the nineteenth as also in the twentieth centuries. A comprehensive study and assessment of the Khatri's contribution in different segments of Indian society may now be made in proper perspective.

Khatri administrators & Commander under Ranjit Singh

In describing the role of Khatris in the nineteenth century, Joseph Davey Cunningham in his *History of the Sikhs* (1848) describes the Kshatriyas (Khatris and Aroras) of the cities and towns 'as enterprising as merchants and frugal as trades men. They are the principal financiers and accountants of the country; but the ancient military spirit frequently reappears amongst the once royal—Kshatriya and they become able governors of provinces and skilful leaders of the armies'. He refers to Hari Singh, a Sikh, and the most enterprising of Ranjit Singh's generals as a Kshatriya, and the best of his governors. So also Mohkam Chand and Sawan Mal were of the same race. 'Bolu Mal, a Khanna Kshatriya, and a follower of the Sikh Chief of Ahluwalia', in the words of Cunningham, 'excites some little jealousy among the Brahmans of Lahore and of the Jullundur Doab; and Chandu Lal who so long managed the affairs of the Nizam of Hyderabad, was a Khatri of Northern India and greatly encouraged the Sikh mercenaries in that principality in opposition to the Arabs and Afghans'. Cunningham further records that the declension of the Kshatriyas from soldiers and sovereigns into traders and shop-keepers has a parallel in the history of the Jews. 'Men of active minds will always find employment for themselves, and this we know what Greeks became under the victorious Romans, and what they are under the ruling Turks'. (in 1848).

Diwan Mokham Chand was the son of Baisakh Mal a Khatri of Punjab whose skill and courage were helpful in pushing him up to the status of Diwan under Ranjit Singh. He seemed to have started his association with the 'Lion of Punjab's family from the time of Mohan Singh, the ruler's father. His military and civil achievements include interference in the Palace affairs at Patiala and the successful solution, annexation of Sialkot, Shakhpura and other territories, conquest of Kangra, and later on the country between Multan and Munja called the Nakki country, as also the subjugation of

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Kulu, Mandi and Suket. This was followed later on by annexation of Bhunbar and Rajaori. The Maharaja also sent Mokham Chand against Kashmir in 1813. He was equally successful in securing the release of the former ruler of Kabul Shah Shujah from captivity in Kashmir and in exchange got the famous *Kohinoor* from the Shah. Mokham Chand was also in command of the forces against the Afghans in July 1813 pushing away the Kabul army at the battle of Hardaru, a few miles from Attock and finally relieved this fort as well. Besides these military achievements, Mokham Chand as governor of Jullandhar doab had many achievements to his credit. During his absence on military campaign, his son Moti Ram undertook the civil responsibilities of the Jullandhar Doab. His grandson Ram Dial, at that time only twenty-two years of age had also a brilliant record of military service in earlier campaign. He led a military division in the Kashmir campaign. The young gallant commander was successful in ascending the Pir Punjal mountain. Left to his own resources in the valley of Kashmir, Ram Dial managed to return safely to Punjab after extracting from the Governor Mohammad Aziz Khan, a letter admitting the supremacy of Lahore.

Diwan Mokham Chand died in October 1814. He was an able general and equally a proficient administrator of the Khatri caste who in the words of Cunningham 'fully justified the confidence reposed in him'. His administrative talents were as great as his military ones, and in his death Ranjit Singh lost his most loyal and devoted diwan as also an able commander of the forces'. The Diwan was liberal, upright and high-minded, according to Prinsep who enjoyed the confidence of the troops placed under his command, and was popular and much respected amongst the entire Sikh community. A long list of Jagirs given to Mokham Chand between 1806-1808, as prepared by David Octerloney drew a revenue of Rs. 6,42,61 rupees.

Mokham Chand's successor

Moti Ram, son of Mokham Chand, succeeded his father as Diwan, incharge of the Jalandhar Doab and the fort at Philour along with all his extensive lands. But the latter's son Ram Dial, the young gallant commander played a greater role as commander of the forces sent by Ranjit Singh against Multan an d

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Bhawalpur as also against the Musalman chiefs of Bhumbar and Rajori who had rebelled towards the close of 1814 and successfully repressed them. Next he defeated the Mohammdan governor of Kashmir and established his authority, as also seized the fort of Attock. In 1818, an expedition was sent against Multan in which Moti Ram and Hari Singh Nalwa participated. In June 1819, Kashmir was taken from its Mohammadan ruler by the Lahore troops. The Sikh army here was commanded by Diwan Chand with Ram Dial at the rear end. Diwan Moti Ram, son of Mokham Chand, was appointed governor of Kashmir. His son Ram Dial subdued Punch under Zabbar Dost Khan and also took Pakholi, Damtour, Chachan-azara and other places for settling the revenue and receiving tribute. Later on in trying to subdue the fierce Musalman tribes of Hazara, the young general Ram Dial met the martyr's death. Hari Singh Nalwa, another Khatri, along with Kirpa Ram, third son of Moti Ram, were sent against the Afghans. They were successful in capturing Attock as also Peshawar. Kirpa Ram also subdued the country of the Azal Khan. Moti Ram, Hari Singh Nalwa and Faqir-Azzi-ud-din comprised the mission sent from Lahore to meet Lord William Bentinck at Simla. Both Moti Ram and Kirpa Ram, son and grandson of Mokham Chand, retired from the services of Ranjit Singh and died at Benaras, where they were living in A.D. 1839 and 1842. This Khatri family had rendered good and brilliant service to the Ruler of Lahore—Ranjit Singh for three generations. Mokham Chand, the founder of the Diwan family, according to Griffin, was the best and most successful general of Ranjit Singh, and it was in great measure owing to his military ability that Ranjit Singh established himself as the sole ruler of the Punjab. It was unfortunate that nearly all his able generals—Mokham Chand, Diwan Chand, Hari Singh Nalwa, Ram Dial—died during his life time. Those left were crafty, designing men, either weaklings or traitors.

Diwan Sawan Mal and Mul Raj

Diwan Sawan Mal born in the year 1788 A.D. belonged to the Chopra sub-caste of the Khatri. His early assignment was in the office of his elder brother Nanak Chand, and in 1820 he was sent to Multan as the head of the accounts office. In

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1821 he became the governor of half the province of Multan, and eight years later the whole province was under his charge. An additional charge of the district of Dehra Ghazi Khan was entrusted to him in 1832. He governed this vast area till his death in 1844 A.D. He subdued the Mazari tribe, notorious for predatory habits. They finally surrendered and their chief Bahram Khan attended Sawan Mal's Darbar at Multan in 1833-34 A.D. He also quashed the rebellion of the Gurchain tribe. The Diwan no doubt faced great difficulty in bringing the frontier tribes under his control. The Kharrals, holding some forty villages near about Sheikupura and Jhang, were a turbulent and thiefish people and extremely fanatic. When opposed and threatened they retreated into the marshes and thick jungles where it was impossible to follow them. The practice of imposing collective fine and its distribution among loyal and stout hearted pursuers was a novel experiment to contain the turbent and criminal elements at the Frontier. It was later on followed by the British Government as well. While there was no cause of complaint against the Diwan in Ranjit Singh's time, difference did arise later on with the Lahore Darbar. On September 16, 1844, the Diwan was fired at while he was at his Darbar. The wound finally proved mortal and the Diwan gradually sank and died on September 29, 1844 A.D. The Diwan was a good administrator and encouraged cultivation and commerce and was equally noted for justice and fair play. In the words of Lepel Griffin, 'Diwan Sawan Mal was the best of all Ranjit Singh's administrators'. He turned what was a desert into a rich and cultivated plain. His impartiality caused the people to regard Sawan Mal with such esteem.

Diwan Mul Raj

This second son of Sawan Mal had served under his father first as *Kardar* or governor of Shujabad and later on of Jhang in the same capacity. He succeeded his father as Governor of Multan at the age of thirty. This young Diwan had to face several problems including the mutiny of Sikh troops which he suppressed with a firm hand and equally dealt with his younger brother who was staking his claim for half the share in a stringent manner, by putting him in prison. Mul Raj at first clashed with the Lahore Darbar over the question of the levy

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of eighteen lakhs, and later on with the Company on the question of the murder of two Englishmen in which Mul Raj was supposedly involved. In the war that followed, it was not till the arrival of the Punjab and the Bombay armies, and after severe fighting the city of Multan could be taken by storm on January 2, 1849. Mul Raj delivered himself to the British as a valient soldier and commander. He was banished beyond the sea and subsequently died in Calcutta the next year. Thus ended the association of this Khatri family with the Sikh Darbar.

General Hari Singh Nalwa

Reference has already been made to Hari Singh Nalwa, a junior contemporary of Mokham Chand who was also in the service of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. He was a Sikh Khatri by caste from Gujranwala. His grand-father Har Das Singh was killed in an action in the year 1762 A.D. His father Gur Dial Singh had accompanied Charat Singh and Mohan Singh on their expeditions. In his early career, Hari Singh distinguished himself at the seige of Kasur in 1807 and received a jagir from the Maharaja for his gallantry. He was the bravest and equally most skilful of all Ranjit Singh's generals and commanded all the expeditions. In 1820 he was appointed Governor of Kashmir, but was recalled in 1821. He became the Commander of the frontier troops and defeated the Yuzufzais despite their numerical superiority. In 1834 he captured Peshawar which was lost to the Afghans for ever. He was incharge of the province of Peshawar during the years 1835-36. He strengthened his position through new fortifications. He also participated in the battle of Jamrud in April 1837, and died fighting in a gallant way in the true spirit of the Kshatriya—ever ready to fight despite heavy odds against him. He was also the founder of the town of Haripur during his governorship of Hazara. He left a vast estate comprising of Jagirs and was succeeded by his son Sirdar Jawahar Singh, who was earlier appointed 'Commander of the forces' at Jahangira in 1832, and two years later, he was sent to Peshawar. He also fought against the British at Chilhanwala and Guajrat. He was later on selected for service by the British and he continued to be in active military service till 1859.

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The Khatri Elite and administrators in Punjab

Ganesh Das in his work *Char-Bagh-i-Punjab*—an account of Early Nineteenth Century Punjab—refers to many Khatri families and eminent Khatris of the time. There was hardly a town in Punjab where Khatris did not have their houses. In many *parganas* they were hereditary qanungos : the Ghais in Rohtas, Badheras in Bahlolpur, Sialkot and Gujrat, Sobtis in Jalalpur, Sahnis in Wazirabad, Nandas in Eminabad, Chopras in Buchcha Chattha, Lakhwar in Sheikhpur, Chopras in Lahore, Puris in Batala, Tulis in Kalanane, Bedis and Methas in Palli, and Sahgals and Thapar in Jalandhar. The Khatri *Kaum* in his words 'was never guilty of contumacy, the Khatris were devoted to their masters and they had rendered meritorious services to the Mughal and Sikh rulers. The Khatris made their fortune as officials of the Government and as traders, *sahukaras* and business men; they often invested their savings in landed property. Many Khatri families held lands in proprietory right. Thus, as an example the village of Bath in the pargana of Gujarat had been purchased by Wadhawan Khatris in the time of Farukh Siyar. Handa Khatris held the Zemindari of Daulatnagar proper; Duggal Khatris held the village of Alamgirpur, Bhatia Khatris of Karianwala, while Badhere Khatris were the zemindars of Gujarat and Herat, and Mehra of Takht-Hazara. Nayyar Khatris held some of the land of the town of Kunja, while the village of Ghartal Khas was in the proprietory possession of Puri Khatris. These instances are suggestive of the Khatris owning considerable areas of land in the towns and villages of Punjab in the early nineteenth century. The clausterring of Khatris of a particular sub-caste in a village was quite a normal feature and it might as well have given its name to that sub-caste, as proposed earlier. The proprietory rights vesting in a sub-caste is recorded by Ganesh Das in many cases. The Handas and Duggals were associated with Daulatnagar and Alamgirpur respectively. Several offices were sometimes combined in the same person for life. Shiva Dayal, father of Ganesh Das, remained the *amil* and *nazim* of a *pargana* in Gujarat. Reference is also made to an old city of Bhera in the Chehab. The Ravi Doab, according to Ganesh Das at that time was a pargana, and the best of the notables of this place was Diwan Kishan Chand of the Sahni sub-caste and Bishan Das.

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Chopra was one of the old officials. His grandson Rup Chand was invested with titles from Maharaja Gulab Singh of Jammu. Moti Ram Kapur, an important official in Jammu, had a temple—Shivala repaired here. There are references to clusters of Khatri sub-castes in between Ravi and Chenab Doab—Rachna. These include Dipoki in the pargana of Hemnagar under the Deva sub-castes Khatris, and Takyas Takkar and Dahusa Khatris being well-known in Pasrur pargana. Gharat Khasa, separated from the pargana of Sialkot was under the hereditary proprietorship of Puri Khatris. The Chatrath and Badhawan sub-castes of the Khatris were prominent figures at Sodhra. Its *qanungoi* was held by Sahni Khatris. Wazirabad in earlier times too had Sahni *qanungos*. The *qanungoi* of pargana Malhana belonged to the Badhawan and Chopra Khatris. Another place Sheikhapur later changed to Jahangirabad was entrusted in revenue matters to the care of Lakhwana Khatris as its qanungo. In Ganesh Das's time the best known among the eminent men and Sahukaras of the town was a Khokar Khatri Pindi Das. Similarly Lala Dit Mal and Amar Chand Lakhwana were men of ability and excellent calligraphists.

In the Bari Doab—Beas and Ravi area, the city of Lahore continued to be the capital of the territories of Punjab. Many eminent men, officials and nobles built beautiful mansions here according to their status. In the Sultanate times, the area around Lahore, known as *pargana-i-bahari* was held by Chopra Khatris. Among the distinguished Khatris in Lahore, Ganesh Das mentions Diwan Himmat Singh, Diwan Lakhpat Rai, Gangu Shah Mehra, Kanhaiya Shah Kapur, Khan Singh Khanna, Kahan Chand Sodhi and Chetu Bahadur Wahi. Prominant among astronomers and mathematicians were Lala Ballhu Ram and Lala Dhanpat Rai Sehgal. Both were the pupils of Lala Sehaj Ram—the best teacher of astronomy in the reign of Ahmad Shah.

While giving an account of Amritsar, and its building complex, the Golden Temple and many other places of worship, Ganesa Das notices the Sahukaras of the city noted for their wealth, as also for public service. Among the Khatris of this place, Bhai Sant Singh Gyani was famous for his understanding of the Granth. Bhai Budh Singh was a distinguished Hindi poet in his time. Further east in this Doab, reference is made to the

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parganas of Sujanpur and Pathankot which were both under the charge of Puri Khatris as qanungos. The descendants of Rai Mahesh Das, a Puri Khatri, held the *qamungoi* of Watala—Batala pargana. This town had some eminent men of the Khatri sub-castes of Puri, Bhandari, Khosla, Dhir and others. Reference is made to Sujan Singh Dhir, who wrote *Khulsat-ul-Tawarikh* and Khulsat-ul-Makatib in the time of Aurangzeb. At a distance of 4 miles from Batala, a place called Achal was under the *qanungoi* of Khatris of the Tuli Sub-caste. Santoka Rai, a *qanungo* of this sub-caste was a man of fortune and felicity. Similarly, Bedi and Mehta Khatris were qanungos of the Pargana of Patti.

The Doab between the rivers Beas and Sutlej contained many important cities and towns. In Jalandar, an old city, among the notable sub-castes of the Khatris in Ganesh Das's time were the Khoslas, the Jagotas and the Basambhas. Ganesh Das refers to Raju Khanna being famous for his generosity. At Talwan small town close to a ferry on the Sutlej, the eminent Khatri sub-castes of the place were Umar and Buchchas. Ganesh Das mentions four important divisions among the Khatris—the Babris consisting of twelve sub-castes. Four of these called themselves *dhai-gharey*. The second group was that of the *Bawanjahis*. Their sub-castes numbered approximately five hundred. Out of all these, fifty-two were distinguished from the rest. In his time twelve of these fifty-two sub-castes were superior and called themselves *bahri-bawanjatis*. Forty of these sub-castes were known as *dharma* or religious. However the term *bawanjati* applied to them all. The third group was that of the Khakkars which consisted of six sub-castes in the beginning but in his time the number had increased. The fourth group was that of the Sarins with a hundred sub-castes. Among the Sarins also there were twelve important sub-castes. All these sub-castes of the Khatris which were to be found in Punjab, Multan, Sarhind and other places numbered nearly seven hundred.

Eminent Khatris of the late 19th century in the Punjab

The latter half of the nineteenth century witnessed the emergence of an intellectual class of Khatris in Punjab which availed of the facilities provided by English education and was equally

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anxious to adjust itself with the new changing situation without sacrificing its identity. Members of this class were taken as the 'natural leaders' for introducing measures of reform. There is a reference to a grand darbar held on October 29-31, 1853 at Amritsar. It was both representative and impressive attended by Rajas, many gentlemen of rank and position in Punjab, local chieftains, the Bedis of Dera Baba Nanak, Commissioners and landlords and merchants. Raja Dina Nath and Raja Sahib Dyal presided over the deliberations of the Brahman and Khatris Committees. (Datta : *Amritsar—Past & Present* (1967) p. 46). The forces of changes consequent to western education were slowly coming up while the conservative ones equally persisted on the social horizon. As a result, social and religious movements became active in Punjab from the late seventies of the last century. It was realized that the road to material success, spiritual gain and social superiority was only one—that of education and literacy. The Arya Samaj movement started by Swami Dayanand had several ardent votaries in Punjab—Lala Sain Das, Lala Jiwan Das and Lala Mul Raj. The Brahmos who had earlier come to Punjab, were initially successful but their acceptance of European culture and social norms was a tactical error, and as such could not gain the confidence of the public. Lala Ratan Chand Barry (Beri) of Lahore started the first Samaj Paper, the *Arya*, in March 1882. A young Bhalla Khatri, Lala Hans Raj later became the chief architect of the New Hindu movement called Arya Samaj. Born at Bajwara in the Hoshiarpur district, this young boy lost his father Chunni Lal in 1876. His elder brother, Mul Kaj was helpful in his education at Lahore and later on joined Pandir Guru Datta's debating club, and in collaboration with others started the *Regenerator of Aryavarta*. After taking his B.A. followed by M.A., he became Principal of the D.A.V. High School in 1885, and subsequently of the D.A.V. College in 1886, retiring from principalship in 1911 (died much later in 1935). Hinduism, according to the 'Regenerator or Arya Varta', though most seeingly a 'tissue of absurd superstitions' is not really so. It has the Vedas for its source and the water, however muddy in its course, can be easily cleared of those impurities which had made it so unwholesome, it contains the highest truths of philosophy compared to which the narrative of the Bible are

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mere fiction (Mark Jones : *The Arya Samaj* p. 49). The four youngmen—two Khatris—Lala Hansraj and Lala Munshi Ram (later Swami Sraddhanand) were instrumental in winning the confidence and support of the new generation of educated Indians in Punjab. Another Khatri intellectual Lala Ruchi Ram Sahni born in 1863 of a family of Khatri merchants at Dera Ismail Khan, was a devout Brahmo, who finally retired as senior professor of Chemistry from the Government College, Lahore, in 1918 (died in 1940). In the words of Sahni, looking back on his own years in Lahore, 'an intellectual isolation filled us with a feeling of our own importance, not a very enviable position for a youth who was standing on the threshold of life but did not know what pitfalls lay in front of him, or his own capacities and limitations, intellectual, social and spiritual'. (Jones p. 57). Lahore at that time, however, became the centre of new learning of political powers, of intellectual and cultural ferment, and, above all else, the gateway to success. The Khatris were the foremost class, literate in English education. The Census Report for 1891 (p. 253 and p. lxix Aff. C) records 99,405 Khatri literates, and of the 19,274 Punjabi literates in English in 1891, the Khatris stood first, followed by the Brahmans, Sikhs, Aroras and Baniyas. Knowledge of English went overwhelmingly to the Hindu commercial castes with the Khatris far out-distancing all others within the traditional social system. The pattern of Khatri domination extended even to professions outside the government service, medicine, law and engineering. Thus N.G. Barrier—in his *Punjab Politics and the Disturbance of 1907* (pp. 17-18) records that among 67 assistant surgeons employed by the British, for example, there were 9 muslims and 52 Hindus. The Hindus included 20 Khatris, 7 Aroras, 13 Brahmans and 7 members of the trading castes. Among the 29 Hindu first class pleaders in 1885, there were 4 Brahmans, 11 Khatris, 4 Aroras, 3 Banias and 2 members of minor trading castes. The enlightened Khatris accepted in good faith the need for English literacy within a milieu of revived Hinduism. For them, English opened the door to the future. Reference might as well be made to the two Khatri families distinguished by their statesmanship and devoted service to the two prominent states of Jammu & Kashmir and Hyderabad. Dewan Amar Nath of the former and

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Maharaja Kishan Prasad of the latter were able representatives of these two families at the beginning of the twentieth century, who headed the administrative set up in their States as prime minister. Rai Bahadur Ram Saran Das was a distinguished Khatri, who presided over the All-India Khatri Maha Sabha Session at Lucknow in 1936.

Khatris as Business and Industrial Enterpreneurs

The success of the Khatris in profession, business and commerce and later on in industry was the result of their skill and entrepreneurship. In 1914 they controlled more than half of the total (non-agricultural) capital of the Punjab economy. They were ahead educationally, socially, economically, professionally and even in the field of industrialization as compared to other trading and commercial classes. The non-agricultural wealth in Punjab as assessed from Indian Tax Return in 1911 shows 5,136 Khatri assesses paying over 10 million rupees as Income Tax (10,832,621). In the area of Industrial leadership by caste, the Khatris were owners of 78 factories out of a total of 312, and bagged 80 factory managership out of a total of 301 (Jones p. 328). They also constituted the majority of Aryas who were literate (5212 out of 17,237) pointing to their reformed outlook. The Khatris availed of the opportunity provided by the changed socio-economic situation, and took over new enterprises, more as a result of their managerial skill and adaptation. In the process of transition due to western education and the impact of Bengali elite—that had settled down in Punjab in the post annexation period, many economic changes also followed. The modernizing factors included development of communication, unified currency, removal of irksome custom barriers and creation of other new opportunities. Caste restrictions were more or less ignored at the time of taking up new avocations. The urge for enterprise was stimulated by free migration from rural to urban areas and even in the provinces. As the Khatris mostly resided in cities, with their skill and professional background they had better chances of expanding their market and professional vistas and with that the horizon of business and employment. They emerged as the most enterprising, mobile, sensitive, initiative-taking and creative section of the Punjab society. (*Govt. of India Census*

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Report 1891, pp. 20-52). Their contact with the new ideas and new business techniques made them appreciate the importance of the changing environment and to exploit the emerging modern education-oriented economic opportunities. (Chaudhary : *Punjab History Congress* 1982 p. 275). The number of Khatris in banking and moneylending business had considerably increased. The Khatris founded modern banking institutions for utilising their expanding financial resources. By 1890's Khatris began to open their own modernized commercial establishments. In 1891, they founded Punjab Material Improvement Society, followed by the Punjab Banking Corporation in 1895, the Punjab National Bank in 1895 and Bharat Insurance Company in 1896. In this context, the part played by Lala Har Krishan Lal (born 1864 at Dera Ismail Khan)—the founder of these Industrial as also several other commercial concerns—cannot be ignored. These include Peoples Bank Ltd., Amritsar Bank Ltd., Cawnpore Flour Mills Ltd. and the Century Flour Mills Ltd. Severe economic crises, however, caused the failure of several of his companies.

Khatris of Delhi, North-West Province and Bengal

The Khatris of Northern India between Delhi and Calcutta in the nineteenth century equally distinguished themselves in different areas—government service, trade and business and even industrial enterprise. Their contribution in socio-religious awakening as also participation in the Indian Freedom Movement—as members and participants in the sessions of the Indian National Congress, however, demands separate treatment. So also the Khatri Literateurs who contributed with their pen and stimulated interest of the people in literature. The Khatris of Delhi centring round Chandni Chowk and in Neel Katra were mostly traders and business men, as also financiers. Some of them had their gaddis—branches in other places like Patna, Murshidabad and Calcutta as well. It is reported about Jagat Seth that 'the entire revenue of the eastern province was sent as a hundi drawn by him on his agents in Delhi'. (Habib and Raychaudhri : *Cambridge Economic History*, II p. 29). The reference to the wealth of the Khatris, as recorded by Manrique which was counted by weight, has already been mad eearlier. One of the richest Khatris of Delhi was Rai

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Chunna Mal (d. 1886) whose ancestors had come to Delhi in Shahjahan's time. The Chunnamals had their ancestral house in Chandni Chowk. They owned vast properties and were estate agents. The Khatris who had come to Delhi from Punjab settled down in business and were either wealthy traders or government officials in the Mughal as also in British times. Another Khatri, described as a pillar of Delhi Khatri's society was Rai Bahadur Sheo Prasad, noted for his readymade turban, walrus moustache and British decorations worn over the Mughal-style Chogha. He represented the Khatris of the old school and as a leading contractor he helped rebuilding Delhi, partially destroyed in 1857 (Chopra : 'Illustrated Weekly'—*Khatris of Northern India*. April 4, 1971 p. 9). The Khatris were equally interested in the civic affairs of Delhi and at one time in the last century, three out of the four members of the Delhi Municipality were Khatris—namely Lala Umrao Singh, Lala Chunnamal and Rai Mahesh Das.

Proceedings further east, the Khatris were equally notable as landholders and Zemindars or traders and industrialists, and bankers and commission agents. In Aligarh, the Khatri were zemindars—the two notables ones being one Anandi Lal and the other Nathu Lal of Atrauli. They also had the cotton business in their hands. The chief Khatri family owned a large steam cotton mill employing 200 hands. In Etawah, Lala Brij Kishore owned an area of 20,000 acres, constituting his zemindari. The Khatris of Cawnpore—Kanpur are also reported to be wealthy having acquired considerable estate in Narwal, Bhogipur. They were doing money-lending business as well. The Gazetteer of the district reports three important Khatri families. Gopi Narayan, son of Gauri Shankar and nephew of Gaya Prasad and Chotey Lal made fortunes as shopkeeper and also as commissariat contractors. They owned villages. Another family was that of Phundi Mal Ganga Prasad which owned one village in Kanpur district and another elsewhere paying a land revenue of over seven thousand rupees. (Lala Debi Prasad of Moulganj is mentioned as another zemindar).

The Allahabad Khatri family of Lala Kandhaiya Mal was very enterprising. The founder of this family had started his business at the beginning of the 19th century, in the name of Gabboo Mal Kandhaiya Mal, dealing in cloth, tents and gene-

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ral contracts. His son Lala Manohar Das (d. 1893) monopolised the banking business as Treasurer of the Currency office and the Bank of Bengal. He was also one of the founders of the Allahabad Bank Ltd. He acquired considerable property. His son Rai Ram Charan Bahadur was a municipal councillor for 30 years, one of the original first largest house owner, and treasurer of the Currency Bank, Government Treasury and Allahabad Bank Ltd. The Khatris monopolised the last Bank's service. The Khatris are also reported as land holders in Phulpur, Handia and Sirathu.

In Lucknow and the adjoining districts of Sitapur and Unnao, there were important Khatri families mostly having their *gaddis* as money lenders, or as zemindars. Those participating in public life included Babu Bansi Lal and Babu Ganga Prasad Verma, while the Seth families of Maurawan and Sitapur constituted land owners called Taluqdars. The Seth Taluqdars of Muzzuddinpur a village in Pargana Biswa trace their origin to Jiwan Das, son of Seth Ram Chandra who according to a tradition held a high command in the army of the Delhi emperor. He had come with Saadat Ali Khan to Lucknow in 1720 and received a number of villages. The Nawab Wazir appointed Seth Dina Nath as Nazim. The latter left his property to his nephew Seth Khushal Chand. A portion of the property went to Lalji Mal, grandson of Munna Lal, who died in 1825. Among his two sons—Seth Murli Manohar and Seth Sita Ram, the former died in 1869, and the latter adopted Seth Jai Dayal who succeeded to the estate in 1887. The Seths of Muizuddinpur, Kotra and Maholi constituted the Khatri elite in the nineteenth century, along with those of Maurawan who had a number of villages constituting their Taluqdari, in the Unnao district.

The Khatris in the then North-West Province—now Uttar Pradesh—thus constituted an important segment of the upper middle class which belonged to some extent to landed aristocracy, excelled in trade and commerce, and was also in Government service as also in Banking concerns. There was hardly a district where by sheer dint of dedication to duty, hard work and proven integrity the Khatris were not affluent. They were landholders and had vast urban properties. They were equally engaged in small industries and other remunerative enterprises.

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The perfume industry at Kanauj and the brass one at Moradabad was mostly in their hands. Migrating east to Bihar and Bengal, the Khatris had clustered at several places. In Patna and Tirhut divisions, they constituted nearly three-fourth of the Khatri population. In Bengal too the Khatris moved out from one district to another for more profitable enterprises. This is evident from the population records of different places. Thus, in Burdwan, which had a fairly good number of Khatris, it was reduced to 5237 a decade later, and a proportionate increase in Midnapur from 1208 to 3807 was recorded. Similarly in Hugli-Howrah there was an increase in Khatri population figures from 701 to 3937+906=4843, Dinajpur from 1256 to 18,95¹, Dacca from 621 to 2769 and Jalpaiguri and Kuch Behar from nil to 1786 and 1481 respectively. The shift in Khatri population in large numbers was probably due to certain unnatural calamities like famine etc. or for better opportunities. Risley, who records the figures in his book on 'Tribes and Castes of Bengal' (p. 484) does not assign any explanation for this changing phenomenon of dimunition or increase of Khatri population in the districts noted above. 'The majority of the Bengal Khatris', according to him, 'were no doubt engaged in some form of trade. A few of them were also zemindars, and tenure holders, and a certain number were occupancy raiyats though they never touch the plough and employ hired labourers to cultivate their lands'. Their social rank is described as 'high and all Brahmans take water from their hands, and Saraswat Brahmans will eat Kaccha food prepared by them'. This is a universal phenomenon and suggests close relationship between the Khatris and their Brahmin priests. Unfortunately there is no first hand account about the Khatri business houses, except what is recorded in district Gazetteers or in Risley's work about their wealth.

While the Khatris of the earlier century (18th) seem to be having a monopoly in trade and commerce, in the century following they seem to have faced stiff competition from the Marwaris and the Gujaratis in Calcutta and in other markets. The Khatris, however, continued to be in business and were also indulging in some new enterprises. S.K. Burman, a Khatri doctor, started a pharmaceutical concern which finally culminated in a big establishment in the name of Daburs'. Another

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Khatri Karam Chand Thapar was equally enterprising. He was successful in building an industrial empire with Head Office in Calcutta. The Allahabad Bank Ltd. founded in Calcutta in 1865 with Manohar Das of Allahabad as its treasurer absorbed Khatri boys in its establishment and it was virtually known as Khatri Bank. Among the notable Khatris of Calcutta were Raja Babu, Shyama Babu and Lala Babu—Lala Damodar Das son of Lala Chotka Mal. There are several localities in Central Calcutta, exclusively under the occupation of Khatris—like Baranasi Ghose Street and Balram De Street. The Khatris in Calcutta in the last century were mostly traders, bussinessmen and commission agents. One Sarwan Lal Tandon was the pioneer figure noted for his 'Kshatriya Prakash'—Part I published in 1891, and the second one in 1902. It was the first attempt made by a Khatri scholar to present the history and position of the Khatris in Indian society, published from Calcutta.

Shiva Dayal Khatri and the Radha Swami Sect

The contributions of the Sikh Khatri Gurus from Guru Nanak onwards do not signify the end of the divine knowledge conveyed through a human mortal of this community. The nineteenth century is equally notable for another religious messiah Shiva Dayal Saheb, a banker of Khatri caste, resident of Agra. He came from a Vaishnavite family and had gathered round him a band of devoted disciples. He taught them a system of secret meditation. He was the founder of the Radha Swami Satsang. In 1861, this Khatri Guru made a public statement of his doctrine. According to the essentials of this system, Man's soul is a pure drop from the ocean of the Supreme spirit, but being wrapped in coarse matter it falls into bondage to material things and may degenerate seriously unless spiritual help is given. Further, the Supreme being has certain beloved sons—men who have risen to perfect union with Himself and from whom time to time descend from the spiritual sphere in mercy and love, in order to deliver men from bondage of matter and to enable them to rise to the highest spiritual heights. Each of the Gurus of the Sect is one of those beloved sons. Sahib Singh ji died in 1878, and his successor, another Khatri, was Rai Saligram Saheb Bahadur, who organised the

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sect, gave it its name, and formulated the theology along the lines of his Guru. He wrote *Radha Soami Mat Prakash*—'Exposition of Radha Soami Doctrine'. (ERE Vol. 10 pp. 538).

The role of the Khatris in the nineteenth century is fairly active, as participants in administration under Ranjit Singh and the successive Sikh States. Reference has been made to Khatri administrators and generals. These include Hari Singh—the best of the governors, Diwan Mokham Chand noted for his skill and courage displayed in civil matters as also at the military fronts, and a shrewd diplomat, as also his son Moti Ram and grandson Ram Dial who also distinguished themselves. Moti Ram along with the noted commander Hari Singh Nalwa, another Khatri and Faqur-Aziz-ud-din comprised the Mission sent by the Lahore Court to meet Lord William Bentinck at Simla. The other family of Chopra Khatris comprising Nanak Chand, his younger brother Sawan Mal and the latter's son Mul Raj was equally notable, rendering service as governor at Multan. Diwan Sawan Mal is described as the best of all Ranjit Singh's administrators noted for his enterprise in converting what was at one time a desert area into a rich land. He was equally successful in containing turbulent tribes at the Frontier. His son Diwan Mul Raj succeeding his father as governor of Multan openly took up cudgels against the British, a valiant soldier and commander. Hari Singh Nalwa was a terror in Afghanistan and he annexed Peshawar which was lost to the Afghans for ever.

Reference has also been made to the Khatri elites and administrators in the Punjab in the early nineteenth century. The Khatri sub-castes clustering round in several cities in Punjab had hereditary quanungoi and were also zemindars. Ganesh Das's account of Khatri families of different sub-castes and their status is very valuable. The recruitment of Khatris in administration had in no way handicapped their talents in the spheres of trade and commerce. As pointed out earlier, the Khatris amassed wealth in the words of Manirique. By the end of the 17th century many Khatri families has settled down in places like Ahmedabad and Surat. The movement of the Khatris from one part of the country to another was quite a normal feature. The account of the Khatri traders and businessmen in the last century is not blank. The wind of change

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brought about by the introduction of English education had its impact on the community and the Khatri youths availed of this opportunity of breathing fresh air. The percentage of English literacy was the highest among the Khatris of Punjab and most probably elsewhere too. It was therefore natural for them to enter government services as also commercial, especially banking concerns. The independent enterprise in trade and commerce might not have been so conspicuous as it was in the preceding one. Competition from other communities, as also lethargy and other things that follow in affluence might have been responsible for the scaling down of Khatris' prominence in business circles in Calcutta and elsewhere too. Individual cases apart, the business *gaddis*—establishments which were at one time humming with activity and display of wealth, seemed to have been functioning on a low key though not completely extinct.

While reference has been made rather casually to Khatri literateurs, and thinkers, reformers and those enthusiasts who were anxious to introduce change in the social life and religious outlook of the Hindus, a fuller study of these aspects and activities of these intellectuals as also their impact on the changing horizon is a *sine-qua-non*. This would include the contributions of Khatris to different disciplines—human ties, sciences, literature, art and drama etc. The religious awakening and the Khatris too demands a separate study, as also the 'Khatris and the freedom movement'.

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CHAPTER 6

Khatri Literateurs and Scientists

A noticeable feature in the History of the Khatris is their significant contribution in different spheres—including literature and science. While references to Khatri administrators, warriors, traders and *Sahukaras* have been recorded earlier in proper context, brief survey of literary contributions of the Khatris, as also reference to men of letters and scientists, poets and philosophers might as well be made. The contributions of the Sikh Gurus, finally culminating in the *Adi-Grantha* have been earlier recorded. Guru Nanak's hymns were collected and copies made for distribution to each of the centres in an alphabet evolved by Angad, his successor, which came to be known as *Gurumukhi* 'from the mouth of the Guru'. Angad's compilation became the nucleus of the sacred writings of the Sikhs. Amar Das made more copies of the hymns of Nanak and Angad, and also added to them his own compositions, as also those of the Hindu Bhaktas, whose teachings conformed to those of Nanak. Amar Das preferred Punjabi—called by some as a rustic tongue instead of Sanskrit—described as the language of the gods (*devavani*). In his words, 'it rains on the earth even though the earth has water in the well'. Sanskrit is like that water which has to be drawn out with some effort and could benefit only a few, while the rain water is for universal good without any effort', The fourth Guru Ram Das, like his predecessor, also composed hymns which were later incorporated in the collection of sacred writings. His own composition is *Var-Gauri*. Guru Arjuna also began compiling an anthology of scared writings in which he also inserted his own compositions. He also welcomed contributions from different sects of Hindus and Muslims for consideration. In August 1604, the *Grantha Sahib*—the holy volume—was formally installed in the temple

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at Amritsar. Arjuna was himself a prolific writer with his hymns—melodious and charming and full of bejewelled phrases—and he became the most quoted poet of Punjab. His composition is 'the psalm of peace'—the *Sukhamani*. The last Guru Govind Singh had classical education in Sanskrit and Arabic as also in Hindi and Punjabi. He began composing verses in the four languages. His *Bichitra Natak*—'the life story', and *Zafarnama*—'the epistle of victory', are the most important ones. He is also credited with the composition of other religious works. He had also in his court several court poets like Sainapat—author of *Guru Sabha*, which mentions the Guru's baptismal ceremony, the tradition of the Khalsa, some of the Guru's battles, etc. Bhai Nand Lal 'Goya', a poet of undoubted ability was another Khatri scholar. He wrote in Persian and his many works include *Tausif-a-Sana*, *Ganjnama*, *Zindagi-nama*, *Diwan-Goya*, *Insha-Dastur*, and *Arzul Alfaz*—all in Persian. Bhai Man Singh, an eminent theologian prepared the final rescension of the *Adi-Grantha*. His main work is the *Bhagat Ratnawali*. Guru Govind Singh was himself a poet of considerable talent, interested in heroic poetry.

Ganesh Das also refers (p. 57) to some Khatri men of letters—poets, writers and scientists of his time as also those of the earlier period. He refers to one Khatri poet in the time of emperor Muhammad Shah and Ahmad Shah, named Lala Indar Bhan Sialkoti with the penname *Warasta*—a man of letters and learning. He was the author of two works—*Mustabhat i-Shuria* and the *Insha-i-Sialkoti*. During the Sikh rule Lala Moti Ram, a Nanda Khatri, with the pen name *Parvana* had attained precedence over others for the elegance of his composition and poetry. His works—the *Diwan-i-Parvana*, *Masnavi-Haqaiqat Rai*, *Manshat-i-Chamaustan* and the *Ruqat-i-Moti Ram* testify to his poetic attainments. The Wadera Khatri family of Gujrat, to which Ganesh Das belonged, included many people who distinguished themselves in different academic disciplines. Gurdit Mal was known for his knowledge of mathematics, Barni Ram for his elegant style of composition, Nushrat-mand for his attainment in music and poetry and Har Narain for proficiency in history. From amongst the other Khatri families, Diwan Thakur Vohra, Lala Jaswant Rai Dhori and Karori Mal Ghai were unrivalled in the composition

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of satire. Natha Mal Marwah, Ram Bhagat Uttam and Beli Ram Kapur acquired fame in the *Kacheri* of Gujarat probably in petitions drafting. A lady named Sahiba Devi with the pen name of Arori, contemporary of Ganesa Das, used to compose verse in Hindi. She wrote with felicity in difficult radifs in which other poets did not even attempt to write. Early nineteeth century Punjab had also some eminent scientists—Natural and Social ones. Dhanpat Rai Sehgal of Lahore and Lala Ballhu Ram were prominent among astronomers and mathematicians. Both of these were the pupils of Lala Sehaj Ram who was the best teacher of astronomy in the reign of Ahmad Shah. Gujrati Mal Chopra and Bhawani Sahai were ahead of their contemporaries in composition and account keeping. Har Narain Badhera and Sujan Singh Dhir were good historians of the time. There is, however, no record of their composition.

Khatri Writers in Persian

There are also references to Khatri writers of history in Persian in Elliot and Dowson's *History of India as told by its historians* (Vol. III). These include Munshi Subhan Rai, a Khatri of Patiala (Vol. III p. 5)—the author of *Ma-asiru-l-Umara*, written in 1107 A.H. (1695-6 A.D.). The opening chapter, the best portion of the work, gives a good account of the products of Hindustan and its geography as known in the time of Aurangzeb. In the words of Colonel Lees who wrote a long article on Indian Historians in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, N.S. Vol. III, 'It is one of the most carefully compiled general histories of India I know of. The author commences with the Pandus, and brings his narrative down to the end of the year 1107 A.H.'

Another historian Khushal Chand, whose caste is not given but appears to be Khatri, was the son of Jiwan Ram, who held various appointments in the time of Aurangzeb and Bahadur Shah. He was a poet and had presented several copies of verses to the Emperor Bahadur Shah. His son Khushal Chand, the author of *Tarikh-i-Nadiru-z-zamani*—'the wonder of the world' was a writer in the Diwani office of Delhi in the time of Muhammad Shah. The first part of the work called *Majmau-l-Akhbarat* is independent of historical matters and contains treatises on Arithmetic, astrology, palmistry, versification and

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some other irrelevant matters. The second part *Zubdatu l-Akhbarat* is not noticed in abstract by Eliot and Dowson. The first volume notices some of the most celebrated saints of India such as Muinud-din-Chisti, Kuthu-l-Aktab and others, and also reformers of the Hindu religion, such as Ramanand, Kabir, Raidas and Nanak with a notice of a Shastras and Vedantism.

Haricharan Das author of *Chahar-Gulzar-Shujai*, son of Udai Rai, son of Mukund Rai, son of Sagar Mal, late *Chaudhari* and *Kanungo* of the *pargana* of Mirat in the province of Delhi, appears to be another Khatri historian though the caste is not mentioned. It could be presumed on the basis of the names ending in *Rai* as also the office held in administration. The author traces the history of the country from Satiyuga to the end of the Hindu rule in one part, and from the region of Shahab-ud-din Ghori to the thirteenth year of Shah Alam's region A.H. 1187 (1773 AD), a period of 635 years.

Sarup Chand Khatri was the author of *Sahibu-l-Akhbar* compiled in 1209 A.H. (1794-5 A.D.). In providing an explanation for undertaking this task, he points out that 'history was made subservient to the controversies which raged among our officials at that time'. Further, 'it is owing to the curiosity and perseverance of the English that the tree of knowledge is planted now in this country; and it is also due to the inquisitive spirit of that people, and particularly to the zeal and liberality of Sir John Shone, that I, an old servant of the State, am favoured with the honour of compiling a work on the History of the Hindus together with an explanation of the names of days, months, years and eras, the reigns of the kings of Delhi with an explanation of the words *raja*, *zamindar*, *chaudhari*, *talukdar*, *hawaldar*, and the mode of administration—both ancient and modern, together with the name of the Subadars of Bengal and the revenue and political affairs of the provinces'. This work is important for the study of revenue administration, being fair and impartial, and he describes the permanent settlement into Bengal, as 'the most precipitate and suicidal measure recorded in the annals of legislation'. (Elliot. VIII. p. 313).

The caste of Sheo Das, the author of Shah Nama or *Munau-Warul-Kalam* is not recorded. He belonged to Lucknow and his work beginning with the reigon of Farrukh Siyar ends with the fourth year of the reigon of Mohammad Shah, in the year

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1217 A.H. (1822 A.D.) (Elliot 331). Harnam Singh was a Sarasuti Brahmin—born at Brahmanabad in the province of Lahore and resided at Malawanur near Lucknow. His father Gurdas Singh was in the service of the Nawabs of Oudh. This work contains references to the justice administered by Zahariya Khan, for many years Governor of Lahore, who ordered a Mughal and his accomplice a washerwoman to death for falsely implicating a Khatri woman in nuptial ceremony with that Mughal. He also mentions Lala Lakhpat Rai and Jaspat Rai, both Khatris of Lahore, who were secretaries and counsellors of Zakariya Khan, and were entrusted with the conduct of all his affairs. They both had received the title of Raja. At the time of Nadir Shah's invasion, when all the people of Lahore were taken away as prisoners, Lakhpat Rai made a present of three lacs of rupees and saved five hundred thousand people from the fate of the serfdom. (p. 344).

Harsukh Rai, author of *Majama-ul-Akhbar*, son of Jiwan Das, son of Rai Basant Ram, was another Khatri of the Sahgal sub-caste (Elliot et Dowson p. 355). Rai Basant Ram was Governor of Agra for many years from the time that province was made over to Maharaja Jai Singh Sawai by Muhammad Shah till the time of the Jat power. The author's great grandfather, Daya Ram, was diwan Muhari Zul Mulk Nawab Sarbuland Khan. Harsukh Rai observes that 'most people of his time, whether from their slothful nature, or on account of their numerous worldly avocations, are averse to reading long and elaborate works of the great writers and historians, who in a style of correctness, and even of eloquence, have very beautifully written with their golden pens, and by the aid of their wit and ability, given accounts of monarchs of past ages'. Further, as the science of history is 'the means of gathering knowledge for wise men, and affords examples to intelligent observers; that as every narration of the past is a precept which improves the understanding of sensible men, and every fact of the former time is a precedent which increases the knowledge of inquiring persons'. Stressing the importance of the study of history—'the science very beneficial to kings and rulers', the author equally stresses its value for the people, it opens the eyes of the common people, 'by affording information in all respects useful to them'. With these preliminary remarks as providing the back-

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ground, it was the desire of the writer of this gleaner of crumbs from the table of liberal persons 'to compile a book in a very simple, intelligible and concise style which might form a collection of historical subjects and a depository of facts'. Such was the work he undertook to compile from abstracts taken from credible works and authentic narratives with a view that the bearers and readers of it, with a little attention, obtain acquaintance with the history of the world. He also mentions the name of his patron Rai Sri Narain, his maternal uncle. The work was compiled in the 1214th year of the Hijra era, or forty-second of Shah Alam corresponding to 1799 A.D., though the history is carried down to 1220th year of the Hijra era (1805 A.D.). Harsukh Rai mentions one Harsahai Khatri, a confidential deponent of Raja Madho Singh, son of Raja Jai Singh Sawai, opposing Jawahar Singh, son of the Jat ruler Suraj Mal, and displaying his valour along with his brother-in-law Guna Sahai in the battle between the Rajputs and the Jats. The author has also given an account of the East India Company as also the virtuous rule of the English who provided peace and tranquility for the comforts of their subjects as also equity and justice for them. The account of this Khatri historian reads like a good piece of interest for highlighting the importance of historical studies both for the rulers as also for the common man.

Another Khatri historian of the 19th century was Kishan Dayal of Delhi—the author of *Ashrafo-t-Tawarikh*. It took five years to complete it in 1826 A.D. for the purpose of being presented to Chandu Lal Minister of Haidarabad (Elliot etc. p. 411). Its chief value consists in its translations of copious abstracts of the *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata* and some of the *Puranas*. It is divided into seven books. The work closes with an account of the Brahmins and Khatris and an eulogium on Raja Chandu Lal. There are references to two or three other Hindu writers—Sheo Das of Lucknow, author of *Shahnama* completed in 1217 A.H. (1802 AD), Manu Lal, son of Bahadur Singh Munshi and author of *Tarikh-i-Shah Alam* and Munshi Sadasukh Dehlavi, author of *Mutakhab-i-Tawarikh*, whose castes are not given and so it is difficult to include them in the list of Khatri Persian writers of the last century.

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Hindi Literateurs

The list of Hindi literateurs who enriched this National language, belonging to the Khatri caste is fairly good, though not so very exhaustive. It includes those who were good prose writers, poets, literary critics and mystic and defective novelists who through their writings and masterly techniques were instrumental in widening the circle of Hindi readers and lovers. Reference has already been made to Maluk Das, the founder of an off-shoot of the Ramanandis and his works: a poem called 'Dasa Ratna' or 'Ten Jewels', *Bhakta-Vatsala* dealing with Krishna's regard for his devotees and *Ratna-Khana*, a dissertation on the 'Soul and God', and many well-known detached verses and apothegms.

Karttika Prasad Khatri born V.S. 1908 (1851 A.D.) is the earliest one, and had a medium span of life of 53 years. His grand-father Govind Prasad was proficient in Arabic and Persian and was an able Hakim—a Unani physician, employed in the Bharatpur State. From there he left for Calcutta in 1828. Karttika Prasad could not have a college education because of the death of his father. At the early age of 14 he contributed a small paper 'Motherland' and on the origin of man from grain (*Janma bhumi our anna se manushya ki utapatti*) and started publishing a monthly Journal 'Prem Vilasini' and a weekly one Hindi Prakash and also *Sarasvatadipika*. His subsequent stay in Lucknow in Postal Department, and later on for 11 years in the Rewa State were not very eventful. Finally settling down at Kashi, he came into contact with Bharatenu Harischand and became a great protoganist of Hindi. In all he wrote about 20 books including a few translations from Bengali. His important novels are '*Ila*', '*Pramila*', '*Jaya*' and '*Madhu-Malti*'. He was the Editor of 'Sarasvati' in its first year, and was also connected with the Kashi Nagari Pracharini Sabha of which he was for some time the Vice-President. He died on July 9, 1904.

A contemporary of Karttika Prasad, Ram Krishna Verma, born 1859 in Punjab, came to Kashi in 1880. He had rather a disturbed early life due to the death of his father, still he managed to study till the B.A. class in Queen College, though unsuccessful in securing his degree. He had, therefore, to wade through different situations in life—from a school master, a book-seller, and a printer to a publisher as also an editor. His

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published works include *Isayimat Khandan* 'A Report to Christianity', *Tasa Kautuka Pachisi* '25 marvels of cards', and translation of *Katha Saritasagar*. The other translations are: *Krishnamurari Nataka, Padmavati-Nataka, Vira-Nari, Amla-Vritanta mala, Constable Vritantamala, Bhuton-ka-Makan, Suvarnabai-Upanyas.i, Sansara-darpana, Viraha* etc. etc. He wrote both in prose as also in poetry and had also brought out a Hindi monthly '*Bharata Jiwan*' which stopped publication after his death.

The greatest contribution to Hindi literature was made by Devaki Nandan Khatri born 1861 A.D. in Muzaffarpur. His ancestors belonged to Multan where one of his forefathers, Navnidhana Rai was a diwan and a landholder. After several generations, his descendants settled down in Lahore, from where in the time of Ranjit Singh's successor Sher Singh, due to unsteady political situation, Acharajmal left for Kasi with his family and settled down there. Devakinandan was the great grandson of this Khatri elite from Lahore. His mother was from Muzaffarpur where he spent his childhood. After some years at Gaya, subsequently in Tikari Raj, he came to Banaras and took to forest contracts business. This involved lot of time being spent in dense forests and visiting lonely and neglected places in those areas. These natural scenes, scenaries and old haunted sites provided not only inspiration but also the background for his mysterious novels full of magical touch and animated suspense. His first attempt in this direction was *Chandra Kanta* in four parts published in 1888, followed by *Chandra Kanta-Santati* in 24 parts which ran into several editions and were instrumental in educating thousands of people in Hindi. These were followed by *Narendra-Mohini, Kusum-Kumari, Anuthi-Begam, Virendra-Vira, Kafara-ki-Kothri, Bhutanath* and *Gupta-Godana*. These are full of illusory incidents, blind love and suspense, keeping the readers interest uninterrupted and unflagged. After rendering illustrious service to Hindi and its detective literature, Devaki Nandan died in 1913 at the age of 52.

Kashi seemed to have been the centre of Khatri literateurs. Thakur Prasad Khatri was a junior contemporary of Devaki Nandan. He was born there in 1865 and was a Punjabi Khatri. His father Bisheshwar Prasad was the head clerk in the

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Government Treasury. His family members were in business dealing in Banarsi Silk and Hundi. Thakur Prasad was educated in Hindi, English and Persian and passed his F.A. Intermediate Examination in 1881. He could not do graduation because of his father's sudden death and had to join Government service as Income Tax clerk and finally ended as police Inspector. This job did not suit his temperament and so he resigned his post, and devoted himself to academic pursuits. His first publication was 'Lucknow-ki-Nawabi' in two parts. He also edited a monthly magazine '*Vinod-Vatika*' for two years. His other contributions were stray essays on geology, astrology and astronomy which won him recognition from the Kashi Nagari Pracharni Sabha. He also prepared portions of *Vaijnanika-Kosha* and edited 'Bala-Kanda' of *Ramacharita-Manas* published by the Indian Press, Allahabad. He died in 1917 in Banaras.

Kashi Nath Khatri, another contemporary Hindi literateur, was a dramatist, an essayist and a translator, interested in projecting his love for the country as also his stress on moral values and ethical rules of conduct. Among his five original works are three dramas—*Balavidhwa-Santapa-nataka, Grama-Pathashala* and *Nikrishta-Naukari*, while the two translation are one of *Kulata* of Pancha Kauri De and *Madhumalati* in 1897, and *Dalit Kusum* of Narayan Das. These are from Bengali original.

Among the eminent Khatri literateurs of the last century and the beginning of the present one, the foremost in Shyam Sunder Das (1875-1945). His services to Hindi literature and his literary activities demand greater attention. His literary activities covered a wide field, including research, and editing and writing of original works—the most important ones being *Hindi-Bhasha aur-Sahitya, Sahityalochana* and *Bhasha-Vijnan*. The first one is a history of Hindi language and literature, the second one deals with literary criticism and the last one is one on Philology. He also wrote on the lives and works of contemporary authors, on Tulsidas, and on Indian dramaturgy and numerous small articles and notices. He was the founder member of the Kashi Nagari Pracharini Sabha, and took great interest in its affairs and was equally responsible for active research in old Hindi manuscripts. He was also the Chief

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editor of Hindi Sabha Sagara, the first comprehensive dictionary of the Hindi language. Babuji's Foreword to Bala Krishna Prasad's *Khatriya-Itihasa* (1939) is a masterly exposition of the need for the history of the community, as also the means and sources—anthropological, traditional and genealogical tables lodged with the Pandas at different religious centres—that could be tapped in this context.

While Devaki Nandan Khatri, described by some writers as the Indian Edgar Wallace was instrumental in creating a new set of readers interested in illustory detective fiction, suspense and love affairs, all portrayed in a magical and haunted environment, his son Durga Prasad went a step further. His detective novels *Lala-Panja*, *Pratisodha*, *Rakta-mandala*, *Safed-Saitan* are more on the pattern of Arthur Conan Doyle's detective novels. The heroes as well breathe nobler and patriotic sentiments. Henceforth Detective novels form a proper place in Hindi fiction. Among the progressive Hindi literateurs, Yashpal stands foremost. He displays his skill in trying to project Marxist ideology through his characters in his works : *Dada-Comrade*, *Desh-Drohi*, *Divya*, *Party-Comrade* and *Jhoota-Sach* and numerous short stories. Rama Rakha Singh Sahgal was another progressive writer and as editor of *Chand*—a Hindi monthly of which he brought out several issues like *Phansi-Anka*, a politically inspiring one, and *Marwari-Anka*—both proscribed. He was interested in reforming Indian society through projection of social evils. He later on brought out *Bhavishya*—a Hindi weekly.

Later Khatri Writers

The later Khatri writers are not taken into consideration for they are either too recent or even if dead their contribution to Hindi literature is on the fringe and even where prolific, it does not warrant detailed consideration. These writers include among local Khatris Kali Das Kapoor, his colleague Gopal Lal Puri, a satirist without publication except in some magazines and papers and Prem Narain Tandon who earned his doctorate on *Hindi Upanyasa men Katha-Silpa Ka Vikas*. Kali Das Kapoor wrote some text books in Hindi and his autobiography entitled *Mudarisa-ki-atma-kahani*. Annapurana Tangri wrote a few novels, short stories and drama, including *Utsarga*, *Abhi-*

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shapa-ya-Baradan and the drama *Bharata-Sanihati*. Some Khatri writers of Urdu also deserve attention, namely Kanhaiya Lal Kapoor, author of *Kalaunasli-urf-Sattyanash*—a farce, and *Ghalib-Jadid-Shore-Ki-Majlis*—an interesting satire on Urdu poets, and Mehra Chand Khatri, author of *ShugufayeMohabbat*—describing the love story of a stark and his mate who collected wood to immolate herself on the pangs of separation from her lord. Other Khatri literateurs contributing to Urdu literature include Rajendra Singh Bedi, Kishan Chand Arora and Professor Gopi Chandra Narang.

The Khatri writers who distinguished themselves in the field of English fiction include two prominent personalities, the great legal luminary G.D. Khosla and the famous art critic Mulk Raj Anand—both octogenarians and fortunately alive. Gopal Das Khosla (b. 1901), a member of the Indian Civil Service, finally retired as Chief Justice of the Punjab High Court in 1963. His writings include *The Last Moguls*, *The Price of a Wife*, *Himalayan Circuit*, *Murder of the Mahatma*, *Stern Reckoning*, etc. etc. He was also the President of Author's Guild. Mulk Raj Anand (b. 1905), novelist, essayist, art critic was for sometime Tagore Professor of Art and literature in the Punjab University, Chandigarh, and was the editor of the art Journal *Marg* for over three decades. He was also Chairman of the Lalit Kala Academy. His publications include *Coolie*, *Untouchable*, *Morning Face*, *The Sword and the Sickle*, *The Hindu View of Art*, *Life of an Indian Prince* etc. He was awarded the 'Padma Bhushan' in 1967. K.L. Gauba, eldest son of Har Kishan Lal Gauba, was an equally forceful writer and a legal luminary, who wrote in the thirties of this century, *Uncle Sham*—a reply to Katherine Mayo's *Mother India*, and the *Pathology of Indian Princes*. Prakash Lal Tandon (b. 1911) with a distinguished career in the Private Managerial Sector, is the author of *Punjabi Century* 1847-1947, *Beyond Punjab* 1937-1960 *Return to Punjab* 1961-1975. A distinguished Historian, administrator and a freedom fighter was another octogenarian Khatri of the Mahtab family of Burdwan from Orissa, Hari Krishna Mahtab (b. 1899). He wrote *History of Orissa*—his Lucknow University Endowment Lectures, *Gandhi, the Political Leader*, and *Beginning of the End*. It may not be out of place to mention the contributions of Taruna Puri who in a short span

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of life—not completing the teens—could, like Toru Dutt of the last century's fame, wrote poems numbering nearly a hundred in English, and also satires and plays in Hindi, and equally participate in these and English one as one of the important cast. These still await posthumous publication in a book form.

Journalism too attracted the attention of Khatri intellectuals in the past and continues to be so even now. The 'Hindustan Times' of Delhi had two able Khatri editors - J.N. Sahni and Durga Dasa Khullar—the author of the famous autobiography—*India from Curzon to Nehru and after*. The royalty from this book as also assets entrusted to a Trust have been set apart funds for Durga-Ratna awards in different areas of Journalism every year from 1974. He also edited Sardar Patel's Papers in 10 volumes. He was a widely travelled person and also presided twice over the All-India Khatri Conference sessions. Those eminent Khatris in the field of Journalism now include Durga Dasa's eldest son Inder Jit, Pran Chopra, Inder Malhotra, Romesh Thapar, K.C. Khanna and Kuldip Nayar and among the younger generation Rajendra Puri and Arun Poorie of 'India To-day'. They have distinguished themselves as editors of important National Daily Papers as also of many books of current interest. These include Pran Chopra's *Uncertain India, On our Indian Border, Before and After the Indo-Soviet Treaty, Bhutto, If I am assasinated*, etc. Kuldip Nayar's *Between the Lines, India after Nehru, The Judgement*, etc., and Romesh Thapar's *India in Transition, the Indian Dimension, The Politics of Continental Development* etc.

Eminent Khatri Scientists

A few eminent Khatri scientists of the present century also need attention for their contribution to natural and biological sciences attaining international recognition. In this context the name of Birbal Sahni (1891-1949) stands foremost. Son of Ruchi Ram Sahni, the famour reformer and Scientist Meterologist of Lahore (1863-1940), the author of 'A History of my Own Times' (unpublished), Birbal had a doctorate from Cambridge and joined Lucknow University as Professor of Botany in 1921. He was the only Paleo-Botanist who attained international fame and was a Fellow of the Royal Society which he attained at the early age of 40. He died in 1949 just a week

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after the opening of his Institute of Palaeo Botany by Jawahar Lal Nehru. His colleague and counterpart at the other end of biological sciences—was Karan Narayan Bahl who was Professor of Zoology at the same University and had made brilliant contributions in the area of his studies which earned him the Degree of Doctor of Science of the University of Oxford. M.P. Mehray of Khairabad—Sitapur combined in himself skill in ophthalmic surgery with philanthrophy and the present Sitapur Eye Hospital is entirely his creation with personal endowment and life long dedication. Another great scientist was Daya Ram Sahni, the famous Director-General of Archacology in India who retired in the thirties. R.N. Chopra, a noted scientist, did the pioneer work in the field of Medieval plants. Among the eminent Khatri scientists of the present generation is Harbans Khurana, now an American citizen who jointly received the Nobel prize for his researches in the area of Genetics. Satish Dhawan is the Chairman of Space Communication and Research Organization and Secretary, Department of Space, Government of India, since 1972, and has a distinguished record of research in Satellites. He was awarded *Padma Bhushan & Padma Vibhushan*. Ram Chandra Mehrotra, Professor Emeritus of Chemistry, University of Rajasthan, is also a distinguished scientist in Chemistry and was also the President of the Indian Science Congress Hyderabad and Vice-Chancellor of the Univerity of Delhi.

Drama, Music and Films—the three areas of entertainment, involving display of aesthetic talents and projection of one's real self, have had many talented Khatris. Prithviraj Kapoor, and his house, have virtually monopolised Indian drama and film industry. The Prithvi Theatres founded by this doyen was noted for theatrical plays, reviving the age-old stage acting. His coming into the Film industry in the early forties beginning with 'Sikandar' heralded a new era. His eldest son Raj Kapoor and the other two brothers—Sashi and Shammi and the grandsons—two sons of Raj—constitute the heritage of that doyen to the Film world. The other Khatris in the film world—past and present—include the late Balraj and his son Parikshit, Chetan Anand, Devanand, Vijay Anand, Prem Nath, Rajendra Nath, Rajendra Kumar, Jitendra, Rajesh Khanna, Vinod Khanna, Kamal Kapoor, Madan Puri and Om Puri, Kabir Bedi, Anju

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Mahendru, Sonia Sahni, Bina Rai, Gulshan Nanda, Prem Dhawan, Mohan Segal, Mahendra Kapoor, Raj Khosla, Sham Behl, Usha Khanna and scores of others. The one Khatri who dominated the film world in his time with his sonorous voice and soft melodious music, still fresh in memory, was Kundan Lal Sahgal, the hero of so many films—'Chandi Das', 'Deva Das', 'Tansen', 'Surdas' and the last one in the forties 'Shahjehan'. The two famous songs sung by this classical musician in light tone—*Balam aye baso more man me* and *Jab dil hi toot gaya* are still fresh and green, sung from one end of the country to another despite the passage of four to five decades. As Naushad rightly said: *hai jism nahi phir bhi awaz hai baki*—'The body is extinct, but the voice is still there'. Khatri actors, dancers and musicians as also producers have contributed towards the rise and the efflorescence of the Indian film industry from its nascency.

The legal luminaries of the community include besides Gopal Das Khosla, the octogenerarian former Chief Justice of the Punjab High Court, and an equally gifted writer, Shanti Swaroop Dhawan (b. 1905), now no more, alumni of the Cambridge University who started practice at the Allahabad High Court and was elevated to the Bench in 1958. After retirement he was appointed Indian High Commissioner in U.K. in 1968. Manohar Lal of the Patna High Court was a very successful lawyer and Government Advocate before his elevation to the Bench. There have been many successful Khatri lawyers who adorned the judgeship of High Courts and they can be counted in dozens at present, scattered over the country including Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh which have not many Khatris at present. Khatris have also distinguished themselves in the field of medicine as also in administration at the highest echelon. One Roop Kishore Tandon of Lucknow was the top most physician more than sixty years back and was extremely considerate towards the members of the community. He went to England at a time when such a visit involved social ostracism. Khatri administrators—as members of the Indian Civil and Administrative as also of the Foreign, Police and Allied Services have been too many, and as also the industrialists—old and new—connected with Heavy as well as Light industries, and have rendered valuable service to the country

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in its path of progress and prosperity. In the post-Independence era there have been distinguished Khatris in the army, including the late General Thapar and Admiral Nanda, as also Air Marshall Mehra, signifying Khatris reaching the top echelons of the different wings of the army. It might no doubt be necessary to recount the services of those important personalities who participated in the Indian Freedom Struggle as also in the later Post-Independence political life of the country. These may be noticed separately.

The reference to Khatri Literateurs, scientists and others in the nineteenth century running into the present one is more in the nature of a record of their works and eminence as might provide a source of inspiration to the new generation. This would as well highlight the aesthetic and the academic side of the members of the community—the display of their multi-facet potentialities and talents. The complete absence of narrow outlook is evident from their writings in Persian and Urdu. Their national spirit is equally apparent from their move to popularise Hindi and its literature. In this context the role of Devaki Nandan Khatri and his son, Durga Prasad as also of many others is very important. The Khatris in the past were not averse to English education and could easily fit in the main stream. They could enter the administrative services and also distinguished themselves in Science as well as in Law and Medicine. Journalism and academic seats of learning were not out of bounds for them. The aesthetic taste of the Khatris took them to music and the films where they have monopolised for decades. Patriotism and an urge for freedom from foreign rule equally made a demand on the Khatris and the contribution made by them in the Freedom Struggle as also in the Post-Independence era in the reconstruction of New India are equally significant. These aspects may now be taken as an independent area of investigation and study.

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CHAPTER 7

The Khatris in the Freedom Struggle and After

The role of the Khatris, of course in terms of individual contributions, in the national life of the country, could be traced from the beginning of the Indian national struggle for freedom. In fact the history of any political organization set up for the purpose of liberating the country from foreign domination is closely linked with the origin and development of national life in the country. The introduction of English education in India had opened opportunities for Indians to enter into services, as also to introduce the political philosophy of western thinkers in the Indian politico-cultural ethos. The Khatris as a community welcomed western education. As under the Mughals, they were conversant with the court language Persian, as also in the new situation they took advantage of Education in English. The birth of the Indian political life with the participation of Indians as nominated members of the Councils, as also of public organizations set up at provincial levels, finally resulted in the call for a national political organization. The Bengal National Conference, the Indian National Congress and the agitation against the Black Bills of Lytton curtailing freedom of the Indian Press; the helpful attitude of Ripon and Dufferin, and finally the initiative taken by a British civilian A.O. Hume, finally resulted in an integrated political life and its organizational set-up in the country. This political body known as the Indian National Congress held its First Session in Bombay in December 1885. The first and probably the only Khatri who took active part in the setting up of this party as also in the proceedings of the later sessions was Ganga Prasad Verma of Lucknow.

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Born in 1863, in an affluent Khatri family in a village Pilani under his paternal zamindari, Ganga Prasad had his early education in oriental languages, Persian and Urdu, followed by schooling and college education at Lucknow in the Canning College. At the age of 20 he started a bi-weekly English Paper 'Advocate', followed by 'Hindustan' in Urdu. His political career started at the age of 22 with his joining the Congress as its founding member. He attended almost all the Sessions of the Congress and was member of the important sub-committees and also a member of the Indian Congress Committee, and Political and Educational Committee in 1901. In U.P., he was the founder of Congress Party and was its Vice-President. He also rendered valuable service for the cause of education and Local-Self Government. He was for a long time Vice-Chairman of the Lucknow Municipal Board. The local Kali Charan College—starting as a school in 1913—was his creation. He actively helped in the setting up of the Banaras Hindu University with a personal contribution of ten thousand rupees. The Lucknow Session of the Congress as also the Allahabad one saw more of his organising capacity, meticulous arrangements and genial hospitality. He was a moderate in his political views, and his love for political freedom as also participation in Congress activities for about three decades, was on an even plane—neither too fast nor stagnant. He was a source of strength to this national organization. He was liberal in his social outlook, but was extremely religious and had come under the influence of Swami Ram Tirth, who stayed with him during his visit to Lucknow. The Ganga Prasad Varma Memorial Hall in Aminabad, Lucknow, has been the scene of political meetings of all the parties for decades. Babuji as he was called had intense love for the community and he was instrumental in creating Kali Charan Khatri Trust under an endowment.

A political contemporary born in the same year was Ruchi Ram Sahni, described as the grand old man of Punjab (1863-1940). He was an educationalist and a social reformer—a Brahmo. After retirement from Government Meterological Department he became a supporter of the Non-Cooperation movement of Gandhiji and equally participated in social, political and educational movements in Punjab. He was a member of the Provincial Legislative Council between 1923-26. He was

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also the Founder Trustee of the 'Tribune'. His monumental work '*History of my own Times* 1878-1937'—unpublished—is a record of his own activities as well as of men and matters of his time. His other work is '*Self-Revelations of an Octogenarian*'.

Punjab also had several other Khatri leaders engaged in the political and cultural activities of the Province and they as well participated at the All-India level. Lala Hansraj (born April 23, 1860) at Bajiwara (in the Hoshiarpur district), was a Bhalla Khatri. After a brilliant academic record, he decided to serve the D.A.V. College without any salary in 1885, from where he retired in 1911. He presided over the National Social Conference in December 1919. One Lala Ram Chand Manchanda, an Arora Khatri was a moderate who also attended sessions of the Congress from early nineties. A lawyer by profession, his participation in the Congress activities was more in the nature of arousing and awakening need for reforms—political and administrative—and participation of Indians in these. This was equally the tone and tenor of the Congress organisation and its resolutions passed at the annual sessions.

Lala Har Kishan Lal, born on April 13, 1864, an Arora Khatri, after an elite education in India and in England, initially started as a professor of mathematics in Government College, and a part-time Lecturer in Oriental College at Lahore, lauded in business and founded the Punjab National Bank of Lahore in 1895, and the Bharat Insurance Company. He started playing an active role in the Congress activities in the first decade of the century. He acted as president of the Punjab Congress Committee and was the Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Lahore Session of the Congress in 1909. With the crashing of his business enterprise due to severe economic crisis, he started his legal practice at Dera Ismail Khan in 1913. In 1919 he was put on trial before a Special Tribunal in connection with the Punjab Martial Law. He also served as a minister in Punjab under the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. His end was bitter and he died on February 13, 1937 in difficult circumstances.

The role of the individual Khatris of Punjab and North-West Province who participated in political activities connected with the Congress organization, was moderate. After the partition of Bengal and the change in the British attitude towards

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this Indian political organization, there was an extremist section of youngmen which was aggressive and violent in its methods and attitude towards foreign rule. Madan Lal Dhingra, a young Khatri graduate, born in 1887, was an ardent revolutionary of this type. After his education in India, he sailed for England for higher studies in 1906. There he came into contact with Shyamji Verma, Har Dayal and Vir Savarkar of the 'Indian House' fame. Highly emotional and greatly attached to Savarkar, he proved his test in undergoing hardship and suffering by getting a nail pierced in his palm without showing signs of agony. His activities aroused suspicion in his family and his brother wrote to Sir Francis Wylie whom he shot dead at a meeting in the Imperial Institute. He was tried at the Old Bailey and sentenced to death. From the dock he boldly stated: 'I admit the other day I attempted to shed English blood as an humble revenge for the inhuman hangings and deportations of patriotic Indian youths. I conspired with none but my own duty. . . As a Hindu I felt that wrong to my country is an insult to God. Her cause is the cause of Shri Ram, her service is the service of Shri Krishna. Poor in wealth and intellect, a son like myself has nothing else to offer to the mother but his own blood, and so I have sacrificed the same on her altar. The lesson required in India at present is to learn how to die, and the only way to teach is by dying ourselves. Therefore, I die, and with glory in my martyrdom'. (Tendulkar—*Gandhi* I p. 103). Fearlessly Dhingra reiterated his faith and he concluded his speech by saying: 'My only prayer to God is that I may be reborn of the same Mother, and may I re-die in the same sacred cause till the cause is successful and she stands free for the good of humanity and to the glory of God'. His last words were 'Bande Matram'. Dhingra's speech made a deep impression on the English. Winston Churchill, then Under Secretary for the Colonies remarked, 'the finest ever made in the name of patriotism'. Gandhiji who arrived in England after this incident, however, observed: 'Those who believe that India has gained by Dhingra's act and other similar acts in India make a serious mistake. Dhingra was a patriot, but his love was blind. He gave his body in a wrong way, its result can only be mischievous. One has to view the whole incident in a dispassionate

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way. It might be another instance of the courage of conviction displayed by a young man for the cause of his country and in the name of his religion, emulating the examples of Guru Govind Singh's young sons or that of Haqiqat Rai Puri another boy.

Another Khatri revolutionary of Punjab was Durga Das Khanna, born in 1909. He was associated with Bhagat Singh and Sukhdeva, the fire brand revolutionaries. His other companions were Dhanwantri, Kumari Lajjawati and the Zutsi sisters. He did underground work of the Revolutionary Party and was arrested on September 13, 1928 in connection with the Lahore Conspiracy case and later released. He was arrested again in 1930 in connection with a Bomb throwing case and was sentenced to death by the Sessions Judge but was acquitted by the High Court. He finally turned a Gandhian and joined the Quit India movement and was sentenced to two and a half years imprisonment.

The revolutionaries in Uttara Pradesh, formerly United Provinces, included several Khatri youths: Ram Kishna Khatri, a youngman of about twenty-two years at the time of his arrest in connection with the Kakori Train Dacoity case. He was a resident of Chanda in Central Province. He was convicted of complicity in the Conspiracy and of having participated in the Commission of the Bichpuri dacoity. Prem Kishan Khanna, another Khatri youth of 26, connected with this case, was working for some years as a contractor in Shahjahanpur. He came from a good family, his father held the position of an Executive Engineer in the East Indian Railway. He was the owner of a Manser automatic pistol which was licensed. He provided cartridges to Ram Prasad Bismil. In appeal, there was found 'nothing to extentuate his joining a conspiracy of this nature' and therefore the Judge saw no reason to reduce his sentence under section 121-A. The sentence of Ram Kishan Khatri was also confirmed. These Khatris—young in spirit and devoted to the cause of the Motherland—took recourse to means which might not be approved by the sober and matured mind, but there is hardly any room for questioning their patriotism. Their sacrifice in terms of privation, suffering and even offering of blood without any return was not in vain. It did generate enthusiasm among the young. The Quit India Move-

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ment of 1942, the role of the Indian National Army under Subhas Bose, and finally the revolt of the Royal Indian Navy's ratings which did include several Khatris finally heralded the freedom fight to the finish.

The three Khatris of the Gandhian Generation noted for their simplicity, austerity and a clean life are Purshottam Das Tandon, Acharya Narendra Deo and Gulzari Lal Nanda. Each managed to reach the top in his own way. Tandon became the President of the Indian National Congress (Nasik Session 1950), while Narendra Deo was a member of the Congress Working Committee and finally after the parting of ways became the President of the Indian Socialist Party. Nanda officiated as the Interim Prime Minister on two occasions and was in the Central Government holding important portfolios like Home Affairs. The contribution of each of them in the political struggle as also in the Post-Independence period does call for notice and evaluation. Another elder Congressman Hari Krishna Mahtab of Orissa, hailing from the Burdwan Khatri family, equally played an important role in the freedom struggle, and held important posts in Free India.

Purshottam Das Tandon, was born on August 1, 1882 at Allahabad in a middle class Khatri family. Receiving his early education at home, he finally graduated from the Muir Central College Allahabad in 1904 and later took his Master's degree as also his Law Degree. He entered the legal profession in 1906 and became a junior of Tej Bahadur Sapru—later on a great Liberal leader. In 1914 he joined the then Nabha State as its Law Minister but resigned three years later to involve himself in the propagation of Hindi. He finally gave up his practice in 1921 to devote himself fully to political affairs. He had joined the Indian National Congress in 1899 as a student for which he had to pay with the loss of a year, being expelled from the College. In 1906 he was a member of the All-India Congress Committee. He was imprisoned for active participation in the non-cooperation movement. In 1923 he presided over the Provincial Congress Committee Session. He also played an important part in the agrarian movement of the province leading to a no-tax campaign in 1930. He was again arrested during the Civil Disobedience Movement. He became a member of the Congress Working Committee at the Karachi Session

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in 1931. He was arrested several times for organising agrarian agitations. He was elected speaker of the Provincial Assembly in 1937-38 and again in 1948. As the Speaker of the House, he maintained its dignity, with fairness, impartiality and uprightness. He was imprisoned again in 1942 and after his release on grounds of health he took up organizational work. He was elected to the Constituent Assembly in 1946, to the Lok Sabha in 1952 and to the Rajya Sabha in 1956. He retired from Public life in 1956. He was elected President of the Congress in 1950 session, but he resigned in 1951 on account of differences with Jawahar Lal Nehru on the question of relationship between the Organization and Government wings of the Congress Party, as also on the question of the Working Committee personnel.

Purshottam Das was not only a freedom fighter who went to jail seven times, he was equally interested in the propagation of Hindi. It was entirely due to his efforts that Hindi was recognised as the National Language of India. He was intimately associated with the Servants of the People Society, the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan and the Rashtrabhasha Prachara Samlti. He was for a long time editor of the Hindi Paper 'Abhyudaya' and Secretary of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, as also its President in 1923 at Kanpur. Mahatma Gandhi called him 'Rajarishi' for his austerities and pure life. The finale came with the presentation of the 'Tandon Abhinandan Grantha' by the President of India Rajendra Prasad, and the conferment of the highest honour 'Bharat Ratna' on him before his death on July 1, 1967.

Tandon was equally a man of the masses in whose uplift he was interested. His greatest forte was his simple life with utter disregard of any show of false vanity. He was deeply interested in the community of his birth—the Khatri one. He inaugurated the Provincial Khatri Conference in 1938 in which this author was present and gave a fine review of the problems facing the community. He equally stressed on the study of Sanskrit and ancient Indian heritage. He also attended meetings of the All-India Khatri Maha-Sabha Working Committee. Tandonji had a full life devoted to the cause of the country and its people, Indian cultural heritage, Hindi and welfare of the downtrodden. He was equally proud of his ancestry.

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Acharya Narendra Deva

This frail socialist with a strong will and an equally brilliant intellect and sharp mind, played a very important role in the freedom struggle of the country and in the post-independence era as an effective opposition leader. Born on 31st October 1889 at Sitapur in Uttar Pradesh in a middle class Khatri family, he was one of the four sons of his parents. His father was a practising lawyer at Sitapur, and grand-father a prosperous businessman at Faizabad. The family was religious-oriented which had its impact on all the brothers. His father shifted to Faizabad from Sitapur after the death of the grand-father and set up his legal practice there. Narendra Deva's father Baldeo Prasad looked after the education of his children with personal attention. Narendra Deva accompanied his father to the Indian National Congress Session at Lucknow in 1899. The early education of this young boy was rather religious-oriented in Sanskrit and Hindi scriptures at the hands of Pandits. He passed his entrance examination in 1906 in the First Division, and repeated this performance at the Intermediate examination as well as in the B.A. from the Muir Central College, Allahabad. For the Masters Degree, he studied at the Queen's College, Benares under Professor Venis and Norman, taking his Degree in Sanskrit with Epigraphy and Palaeography. Finally in 1915 he took his LL.B. from the Allahabad University, and started his legal practice at Faizabad. He was a successful lawyer in no time, but his interest lay elsewhere—in political affairs and in the propagation of Hindi.

During his stay at Allahabad, he got interested in Indian Congress movement and its protoganists, particularly Balgangadhar Tilak, Lajpat Rai, Bipin Chandra Pal, and Aurobindo Ghosh—representing the Forward elements. The two papers *Bande Matram* and the *Arya* were on his reading list along with books of interest relating to Politics, Current Affairs and those of Indian History and its culture. As an admirer of Hindi, he joined hands with Purshottam Das Tandon in its propagation through personal contributions. His contacts with Sachindra Nath Sanyal and other revolutionaries of the time drew his sympathy for them and their methods. It was, however, after meeting Tilak that he joined the Congress and decided to play an active role in political life. He set up a branch of the Home

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Rule League at Faizabad in 1916 with himself as its Secretary. This was the beginning of his activities in the political field. He also met Jawahar Lal Nehru at the same time, and finally joined the Kashi Vidyapitha in 1921 under Bhagwan Das as its Acharya on an Honorary basis for some time. After the death of his father, he accepted a paltry allowance of Rs. 150/- per month. Following the retirement of Bhagwan Das he became its Acharya or Head, and since then this title was prefixed to his name. This academic situation suited to his taste and was self-satisfying. It provided opportunity for acquisition of knowledge as also its dissipation among those who had an urge for it. Narendra Deva was extremely successful in this institution as a professor and as also its Head. He kept up his studies and concentrated on Scientific Socialism or Marxism in all seriousness. But he became deeply interested in Buddhism and its Philosophy which finally culminated in his magnum opus—*Abhidharma Kosa and Bauddha Dharma Darsana*—posthumous work.

Narendra Deva's involvement in the Congress and its non-cooperation Movement begins from 1921 as a member of the U.P. Provincial Congress Committee and also of the All-India Congress Committee. He also joined the Independence of India League founded by Nehru and Subhas Bose, and worked as its Secretary. He led the Simon Commission boycott procession at Banaras in 1929. In 1930 he was arrested during the Civil Disobedience Movement, and again in 1932 for participation in the No-tax campaign. He was the architect of the Congress Socialist Party, inaugurated in 1934 under his presidentship with Jaya Prakash Narain as its first General Secretary. He became a member of the Congress Working Committee in 1936 with Nehru as the Congress President and continued till 1938 along with Achyut Patwardhan, another Socialist. He was also elected in 1936 to the U.P. Legislative Assembly but was reluctant to join the Ministry. He, however, accorded his full support to the Congress Party.

At the outbreak of the Second World War and the resignation of the Congress Ministries, Narendra Deva was in favour of starting a nation-wide struggle but not at the cost of the Congress organisation. The Socialists were still in the Congress Party. He courted arrest during the Individual Satyagraha in

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1940. The Quit India Movement of 1942 put him in Ahmedanagar Jail along with other members of the Congress Working Committee and he remained in detention till 1945. In 1946 he was elected to the U.P. Assembly but he refused to join the Ministry. Two years later, the Socialist Party seceded from the Congress one and Narendra Deva and 12 other members resigned their seats in the Assembly. They were all defeated in the bye-elections. In 1947 Narendra Deva was appointed Vice-Chancellor of the Lucknow University. He successfully completed the first term of three years and more than half of the second one to leave this University and take over the similar assignment at the Banaras Hindu University. There he resigned in 1953 on grounds of ill-health.

The break away from the Congress on ideological grounds seems to have disturbed him, as he personally gave vent to his feelings in some delicate moments. The merger of his Socialist Party with the Kisan Mazdur Praja Party led by Acharya Kriplani—under the new name Praja Socialist Party, and again its further break up into two with Lohia leading a separate socialist party of his creation, seems to have upset him. His own friends and proteges had deserted him when he was in very bad shape with virulent attack of asthama—which had been troubling him since 1926. The mental and physical strain proved too much for him and he was too ill to attend the Gaya session of the Party in 1955, but the Policy programme prepared under his guidance was adopted in this session. Narendra Deva was elected a member of the Rajya Sabha from the U.P. Vidhana Sabha in 1954.

Narendra Deva combined in himself the qualities of an elderly statesman—honest and refined, devoted to the cause of his conviction and a firm believer in national integration and human values. Humility, sincerity, compassion and love for the fellow beings were his good points. He donated one-third of his salary as Vice-Chancellor amounting in those days to seven-hundred rupees to the poor boys fund of the University. The students actually mobbed him and were virtually in tears when he was planning to leave the Lucknow University. He had won the admiration and love and devotion of students and teachers alike—something which is rather rare these days. He was not rich but still shared whatever he had with others. His

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house in Lucknow—was open for a free *langar*—to comrades and friends alike. It was a sight to see the body of this great Khatri son of the country being brought in an Indian Air Force Plane from Erode, and carried from the Air Port in a bedecked lorry covered with flowers. The then Governor of Uttara Pradesh K.M. Munshi was the first to lift the pall, and Kamalapati Tripathi his old student at the Kashi Vidyapitha touching the feet of his Guru. The entire route from Amausi Air Port to his residence at New Hyderabad was lined with mourners shouting—*Acharyaji Amar Rahenge*.

Such was the love of the people for this freedom fighter—a scholar, a thinker rather a progressive one, and, above all, a humanist, who gave his life to the country and to those academic institutions which he headed in a spirit of sacrifice and dedication. He did not claim anything for the services rendered by him to the Nation. In return he sacrificed his all, leading a life of privation with a cheerful spirit even when his friends in the party had deserted him. His old friend and comrade Jawahar Lal Nehru described his passing away as a great personal loss and that of the Nation. While Narendra Deva was a Marxist in thinking save its rigid formulations, he was not averse to Indian cultural Past and its traditional values. He did not see any difficulty in his adherence to the country's rich heritage. To him Marx was 'a great democrat and an equally great humanist'. It was a disappointment to him to find the teachings and ideals of this great thinker being distorted and misplaced by the Communists. Acharya Narendra Deva was equally attached to the family traditions and had great respect for his elder brother Mohendra Deva who had presided over one of the Provincial Khatri Conference Sessions.

Gulzari Lal Nanda

The octogenarian Nandaji, fortunately still alive, has not yet completed the full circle of his activities—academic, trade-union, political and finally socio-religious. Born on July 4, 1898 at Sialkot he had a brilliant academic career with a First class in English Literature from the Foreman Christian College, Lahore. As a double gold medalist in English and History, he subsequently played a hat-trick with a First in Economics as well. He strayed into Politics and joined the non-cooperation

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movement in 1921. He was later on Professor of Economics at the National College, Bombay. His part in the freedom struggle was overshadowed for many long years by his massive role in shaping the trade union movement at Ahmedabad in line with the Gandhian traditions. Although a Punjabi by birth, Nanda had Gujarat as his area of political activities. He continued to be Secretary, Textile Labour Association, Ahmedabad for a long period of more than two decades (1922-46). He was jailed during the Satyagraha campaigns in 1932, 42-44. Gujarat accepted him and he won three elections from this region with thumping majorities. In the old State of Bombay he was interested in bettering labour conditions. He was invited by Nehru to join the Planning Commission as its Vice-Chairman between 1950-51 and again in between 1960-63. He became Minister for Planning in the Government of India in 1951-52, and with two additional portfolios of Irrigation and Power—1952-57, and Labour and Employment—1957-63. He was Interim Prime Minister after Nehru's death from May 27 to June 11, 1964, and again after Shastri's death from June 11 to 24, 1966. He was Minister for Home Affairs—1963-66, and for Railways—1970-71.

As Home Minister he took up the pledge to root out corruption within two years time, attacking the problem at the grassroots. According to him, 'if the Government could provide a better and more honest administration, half the battle is won'. He was equally interested in eradicating communalism. He is no doubt a devout Hindu and was the founder of the Bharat Sadhu Samaj. He thinks that religion provides strength as also spiritual liberalism. The path to communal harmony, according to him, lies not in godlessness but in following a code of religious conduct and morality which alone provides religious tolerance. A deeply spiritual mind need not be construed as a sign of cowardice and pussilanimity, but one of strength.

He retired from active political life in order to concentrate fully on activities of a socio-religious nature which could ensure clean political life. He became Chairman, Kurukshetra Development Board and Vice-Chairman, Citizen's Central Council which he founded in 1972. He is also the founder President of Navjeevan Sangh and Manava Dharma Mission as also a Peoples Forum. His important publications include *Some As-*

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pects of Khadi, Approach to the Second Five Year Plan, Some Basic Considerations, Guru Tegh Bahadur, Saint and Saviour and *For a Moral Revolution.*

Nanda stands for purity of life in private as well as in public, and stresses on following a devout religious life based on rules of conduct. His planning is best seen at Kurkshetra—the famous religious centre. These traits in him are in consonance with ancient traditions. His self-less work, an urge for social justice for all classes of people irrespective of status—social and economic, and an earnest desire to uplift the moral stature of man are some of the characteristic traits of this Khatri personality who steered through difficult situations in life with courage and determination. He was recently honoured with the presentation of a big purse for the cause most dear to him.

Hari Krishna Mahtab

Another Khatri freedom fighter, who died recently, was Hari Krishna Mehtab of Orissa. Some reference has been made to him as a Literateur. His activities as a participant in the struggle for freedom, and later on his association with the Government call for reference in this context. He was born on November 21, 1899 at Agarpada (Balasore district, Orissa) in an affluent Khatri family, closely related to the Burdwan House. He was drawn to the freedom movement in 1921, elected Secretary District Congress Committee, Balasore in 1921, and was also President of the Utkal Congress Committee (1930-31). He was elected to the Bihar and Orissa Legislative Assembly in 1924. As a freedom fighter he courted arrest several times and spent several years in Ahmednagar fort Jail along with Nehru and other members of the Congress Working Committee. He was Chief Minister of Orissa between 1946-50. In Nehru's Cabinet, he was Minister of Industries and Commerce from 1950-52, followed by Governorship of Bombay 1955-56. He went back to his State and remained its Chief Minister between 1956-61. He was member of the Lok Sabha between 1962-67, and was also the General Secretary of the Congress Party in Parliament 1952-55, and its first Deputy Leader 1962-63. He remained a member of the All-India Congress Committee from 1938-62. After parting company with the Congress party, he

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founded the Jana Congress in Orissa and also joined hands with the Swatantra Party in forming a coalition ministry in Orissa in 1967. He was virtually the architect of Orissa. He had been a prolific writer and his important publications include *History of Orissa, Gandhi, the Political Leader* and *Beginning of the End*. Honorary degrees of Doctorate in Law and Literature were conferred on him by Andhra and Sagar Universities, as also by Utkal University of which he was Pro-Chancellor between 1951-52. Mahtabji combined humility with dignity. He was a spiritualist devoted to religion and also to his community having attended some of its annual sessions, including the last one in Bhuvaneshwar. He had been a prolific writer and was a good journalist. Age had dampened his literary flair as also his interest in the welfare of the country.

Bishan Chand Seth

Bishan Chand Seth of Shahjahanpur is a Khatri of distinction who dedicated himself to the cause of the community and the country. He was a member of the Parliament on the Hindu Mahasabha ticket. His contribution to the Indian political life has been in an independent way. At the moment he is at Vrindaban leading a life of a devotee to the Lord, but occasionally attends sessions of the Khatri Conference.

There are many more Khatris who were connected with the Freedom Movement and even after in the reconstruction of India, including Mehar Chand Khanna who was a Minister in the North-West Frontier Province, and after partition became Minister incharge of Refugees and Rehabilitation in Nehru's Cabinet. P.C. Sethi of the Madhya Pradesh was Minister at the Centre for a number of years and held several important portfolios in succession including that of Home Affairs. He was also Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh between 1972-75.

The record of the Khatris in the struggle for freedom is fairly good, representative and much greater in proportion to its population strength in the country. Right from the very beginning of political activities, the Khatri intellectuals and public men, especially from the then North-West Province and Punjab, participated in this exercise. The role of Ganga Prasad Varma and Har Kishan Lal, representing the moderate elements might be mentioned in this context. The extremists—the youn-

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ger ones in their twenties, however, indulged in violent activities at the cost of their lives. Madan Lal Dhingra, the first *Shaheed*—the martyr who drew English blood by shooting down Francis Wylie in London in the first decade of this century, was followed by another Khatri Revolutionary of Punjab, Durga Das Khanna, who did underground work for the Revolutionary Party of India in the twenties. Ram Krishna Khatri and Prem Krishna Khanna were connected with the Kakori Train Dacoity case. The Gandhiates representing a different class devoted to non-violence, non-cooperation included some other Khatris who distinguished themselves in the Freedom Struggle as also in the Post-Independence era. Prominent among these were Purshottam Das Tandon, Acharya Narendra Deva, Gulzari Lal Nanda and Hari Krishna Mehtab. They were brilliant intellectuals, good writers with a facile pen, pure in public and private life and devoted to the cause of the country and countrymen. Their life history is a saga of struggle for freedom and later on of dedicated service to the Motherland.

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CHAPTER 8

Khatris and the Allied Groups

The Khatris have been closely allied to certain groups or clusters of people who seemed to have formed separate castes. Their relations are close, origin common, and contacts deeper. Some of these like the Aroras, Soods and even Bhatias have been accepted by the All-India Khatri Conference as parts of the Khatri Biradari with whom there could be *roti*—bread and *beti*—daughter relationship. The *Sarasvata* Brahmins, the purohits, the *alter ego* of the Khatris are no doubt a degree higher in the social hierarchy, but the *roti* relation exists. The *handa*—or the acceptance of *Kacha* food from the kitchen of the Khatri house by the Sarasvata Brahmin purohits was an extremely common thing in the past in the Punjab. Here in U.P. as well there was hardly any hesitation of accepting such a food by the Brahmin priest. A lot of stories are connected with this practice. The Muslim Khatris still retain their separate social existence, confining their marital relations among themselves. It seems necessary to assess the position of these socio-religious groups in the wider context of the history of the Khatris as a whole.

Aroras

According to Baines, the Aroras of South-western Punjab are closely allied to the Khatris. They started from nearby the same region as the other Khatris, but do not appear to have pushed their way into the fertile tracts of the north, but to have remained on the less remunerative plains along the Indus. The Arora or Rora as he is often called, is the trader *par excellance* in the south-western portion of Punjab, that is to say of the lower valleys of the five rivers; while higher up their courses he shares the position with the Khatri. More than half the Aroras of the

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Punjab, according to Ibbetson (p. 250), dwell in the Multan and Derajat divisions. The Aroras claim to be of Khatri origin, and they follow some of the Khatri sub-divisions. According to George Campbell, 'there can be no doubt that they are ethnologically the same, and they are certainly mixed up with the Khatris in their avocations'. I shall treat the whole kindled as generally Khatris'. It has been rightly suggested that as the Multan and Lahore Khatris are Khatris of Multan and Lahore, so the Aroras are Khatris of Aror or Alor, the ancient capital of Sindh, now represented by the modern Rori. There are two main divisions of the caste, *Uttaradhi* and *Dakhana*. At the time when Ibbetson wrote (1916), the *Uttaradhi* and *Dakhana* do not inter-marry, the section being endogamous, and the clan as usual exogamous. All Aroras are said to be of Kasyapa gotra. The women of the northern or *Uttaradhi* section wear red ivory bracelets and the section is divided into two sub-sections called '*Bahri*' and '*Bunjahi*'. The women of the southern or Dakhani section wear white ivory bracelets. This section is sub-divided into the 'Dehra' and 'Dakhanadhain'. The Bahri and Dakhanadhain claim social superiority. The Dakhanas are far strongest in the southern and south-western districts of Punjab. The total Arora trading population recorded by Baines is 7321000. The Aroras are equally divided into numerous sub-castes—called *allas*—based on paternity, maternity, avocation and local place names. Time was when the Khatris looked down upon the Aroras for historical or traditional reasons but that attitude no longer prevails. Marital relations between the two are quite common and it is not a one-way affair. In fact one should accept Campbells contention that undoubtedly they are ethnologically the same.

Sarasvata Brahmins

The Sarasvata Brahmins, as distinguished from the Gaur and Kanyakubja, are supposed to be those of the Aryan stock who had settled down on the banks of the Sarasvati. According to the traditional account as preserved in the *Bhavishyotara* Purana (40 and 41), Parasurama, the annihilator of the Kshatriyas, out to destroy the warrior class as a whole, was implored to spare the females, children and old men of the massacred Kshatriyas which the latter did, and in so doing equally blessed

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the survivors as 'the progenitors of a high and fortunate race'. He equally asked the Sarasvata Brahmans to take these children home and perform all the ceremonies that ought to be performed by Kshatriya lads. (*Kurvantu Capi Sarvesham Sanskaram Kshatriya*). The Sarasvata Brahmins and their association with the Kshatriyas seems to be well-established even before the traditional Parasurama onslaught against the Kshatriyas as reported in this Purana of which the date is rather uncertain. The association continues to this day and different Sarasvata families are the family priests of the Khatris. The Sarasvata Brahmins of Punjab are primarily divided into five sub-castes—called 'Panjajati' which include *Jaitli, Jhingran, Tikkhe, Mohile* and *Kumadiya*. Another list of the Panjajatis include Kaliye, Maliye, Kapuriya, Bhaturiye and Bhagge. There are, however, a large number of sub-divisions, deriving their names from the places where their ancestors had settled, or from nick names given to individuals. It is, however, difficult to distinguish the endogamous, exogamous and hypergamous groups since these have been mixed together.

The Sarasvata Brahmins are found in U.P., Bihar and Bengal and also in Alwar, Rajputana and in Bombay and North Konkan. There is a recent study of the Gaur Sarasvata Brahmanas of Western India (JIH 1970 pp. 160 ff) from the sociological point of view. The 'Sahyadri Kanda' of *Skanda Purana* notices the migration of these Brahmanas from Trihotrapura, modern Tirhut in Bihar, to Goa. Another migration is described in the Mangish Mahatmya of the same Purana. It took place from Kanyakubja for south as far as Rameshwaram. This might be a later interpolation. The northern origin suggests the solidarity and integration of these Brahmanas who are now mainly found in Konkan, North and South Kanara and certain parts of Cochin, Travancore and Mysore with Goa as the focal point of their dispersal in the south. The Sarasvata Brahmins of the North are closely associated with the Khatris as their *purohits*. The *yajmani* system with a Sarasvata Brahmin family associated with one or more Khatri families was widely prevalent till the other day and these priests officiated at all the religious functions in their yajman's families. They used to take *Kaccha* and *Pakka*—unfried and fried food at their yajman's place. They also partook *Sradha*—obsequial food, an annual

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feature. In Punjab—the *Handa* system—accepting *Roti* from the house of the yajmana was a normal feature in the past.

Like the Khatris the Sarasvata Brahmanas are as well divided into Dilwalis, Lahorias, Agrawalas, and Purbias. This seems to point to the migratory movements of the Khatris along with the family priests. The Saraswata priests are attached to different Khatri sub-castes, as for instance, the Jaitlis are the priests of Mehras or Mehrotras, Kapurias of Kapurs, Jhingrans of Khanna and Tandon families, Tikkhas of Seths, Mohilays of Saigals, Kumaria of Kakkar, Bhaturias of Mahendrus, Kaliyas of Dhaons and Suds, Baggas of Chopras, Hauslas of Beris and Wahis etc. The Khal upar Kumaria are supposed to be that branch of the main Kumarias whose ancestor had to pay for his insistence on taking Handa from an old yajmana woman, despite his high official status.

Bhatias and Soods

A few other groups are closely allied to the Khatris and are accepted as a part of the wider Khatri community though they maintained, like the Aroras, their separate identity. These include the Bhatias and Soods. According to a traditional account, the Bhatias are supposed to be the descendants of those Kshatriyas of old who sought shelter in the town of Bhatner at the time of Parasuram's onslaught. They are divided into 84 sub-groups. The Soods trace their ancestry to Rama's cook, assumed to be a Kshatriya. Their complexion, ceremonies, bravery and refined intellect are supposed to accord them a place in the Kshatriya—Khatri community. (Seth p. 221). There is no reference to their sub-divisions. Besides Punjab and other parts of Northern India, especially U.P. where they are scattered, the Bhatias are settled in Cutch, Kathiawar, Gujarat, Bombay, and are also traced in Ratnagiri, Khandesh, Thana, Kanara, Sholapur, Belgaum and Poona districts. The total strength of the Bhatias as recorded by Baines is 60,600.

Musalman Khatris

Some reference has already been made to the Musalman Khatris. The reason for their conversion to Islam is said to have been some dispute with the Brahmin priests, as was the case about the middle of the 16th century A.D. when some

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Khatri families migrated from Sind to Cutch. The Musalman Khatri families of Punjab, chiefly in Multan and Jhang, are commonly called Khojas and are said to belong chiefly to the Kapur section of the Khatris. A recent study of the Musalman Khatris is made by Yusuf A. Patel of Karachi (1976). This work in two volumes is a comprehensive study of the Khatris, not only in present Pakistan but also of those Khatris living outside the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent. Yusuf Patel a Cutch Khatri and its author, who migrated to Karachi in 1948 and made it his home. This elderly Muslim Khatri who was also the President of the Pakistan Khatri Conference, has made a cultural and historical study of the Khatris, particularly in that country as also of those in different parts of India. He particularly concentrates on the Muslim Khatris of Cutch, Makran, Gujarat, Kathiawar, Sind, Mandvi, Malvi, and the Halai Muslim Khatris of Karachi. Reference is also made to Sindhi Khatris—both Hindus and Muslims. The author has also collected the data relating to Khatri population in different areas as also their social customs and rites. There is reference to 96 *nukhiyas* or elders of the Musalman Khatris of Cutch, Kathiawar, Sind and Gujarat. The book is prompted by healthy sentiments for the welfare of the community with a broader outlook, and the figures of the Muslim Khatri families in different places are fairly interesting. The second volume is a record of Muslim Khatri personalities, Khatri institutions and welfare activities, reading more like a Who's Who. An interesting part is the reference in the preface to Muslim Khatris retaining their individuality and pride in their birth. The conversion to Islam did not mean alienation from the cultural ethos of the past. Difference in dress, religion and of course political allegiance—belonging to a different country, has not wiped away or obliterated their love for the community. Marital relations are confined only to the Muslim Khatri families and the community continues to be endogamous. They equally follow many original Khatri customs and rites. It is reported that many Muslim Khatris are interested in the preparation of horoscope and the tallying of the two *patris* of the prospective bride and bridegroom. The late Fazle-Hasan, who was a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council in the thirtees of this century, was a Saigal Khatri and he used to invite a Brahmin priest for sug-

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gesting the marriage date. This fact is reported by Durga Das in Memoirs entitled 'India from Curzon to Nehru'. There was a time when some of the Muslim Khatris used to suffix their sub-caste against their Muslim names. This practice might not be so common among the Muslim Khatris of Punjab in Pakistan. Yusuf Patel writes in his book that these Muslim Khatris are not ashamed of affixing Khatri to their names though some of them have suffixed certain administrative titles like Patel to their names.

Sikh Khatris

The relations between the Hindu and Sikh Khatris have been those of *roti*—bread and *beti*—daughter, and marital relations between the two have been common. There was a time when the first male child in a Khatri family was baptised as a Sikh. The *Ardasa*—or benediction, and *bhog*—were very common among the Hindus too. Among the Sikh Khatris, the Bedis and the Sodhis constituted the elite or the Guru castes, since Nanak belonged to the former and the latter Gurus to the latter. The Sikh Khatris continue to suffix the sub-castes to their names to distinguish themselves from the Jat Sikhs as also Sikhs of other communities. The Khatri caste, as such, has been an integrating factor in two groups professing Hinduism and Sikhism. Religion has not been a dividing line. A fuller account of the Sikh personalities from Gurus to military commanders has already been recorded earlier. The Khatris of the Hindu-Sikh communities inter-dine and inter-marry between themselves and they retain their caste surnames. It is just like the Vaishyas and the Jains entering into marital relations. Of late, the political factor has sought to disturb the close and intimate relations between the two communities for personal reasons. The Sikhs come within the purview of Hindu Marriage Succession and Divorce Acts, and do not have a separate Civil Code. Here the Khatri caste customs and traditions and centuries old relations could serve as an integrating force when political factors and selfish considerations could create a wedge in their intimate relations.

A summary review of the relations of the Khatris with the other groups—allied to them in one way or the other and separated from them for historical or geographical relations has

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been done more in the spirit of social introspection. Modern society has become broad-based. Caste rules and restrictions are not so rigid, while western education and impact have widened individual outlook. In these circumstances the need of the time is to integrate the community by shedding an insular outlook and accept all those who form part of the community for purposes of social contact and establishing cordial relations. The role of the Sarasvata Brahmins in relation to the Khatris in the past have been very positive. There might have stray cases of some greedy priests exploiting the situation for personal reasons which drove some families out of the pale of the community. The *yajmani* system is fast dying and a time might come when it would be difficult to find a well-read Sanskrit Pandit ever for performing marriage, leave aside other Sanskaras which are encumbent on the twice-born people. It might, therefore, be necessary to ponder over such questions which are of vital importance not only for the members of the Khatri community but also of their relations with the allied groups in a wider set-up.

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CHAPTER 9

Summing-Up

The history of the Khatris is in fact a saga of Aryan race in India. With a long span of more than three millenium years at least, the Khatris continue to represent traits of Aryan spirit. As true Kshatriyas they have displayed their martial character not only in ancient and medieval times but even in modern one. In the post-Independent era, members of this community have distinguished themselves as Generals, Admirals and Air Marshall, representing the headship of the three wings of the army—land, sea and air. They have equally fared well as heads of administration and its different departments. Their roles in finer areas of literature, science, judiciary, films and music have also been specific and prominent. As religious teachers and thinkers they provided new hopes and aspirations to the people in times of difficulty and political and mental sufferings. The line of Sikh Gurus consists of only the Khatris and even as late as the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the founder of the Radhaswami sect was a Khatri. So also have they played a very important part in administration at different levels, and in the struggle for the attainment of freedom from foreign rule. There have been Khatri President of Indian National Congress as also the Acting Prime Minister of the country as well as a few State Chief Ministers, symbolising the continuity of the link established from the time of Todarmal of the Mughal period. Ayamal of the eighteenth century, Mohkan Chand and Chandoo Lal of the nineteenth and Kishan Prasad of the present century were eminent Khatri administrators. A record of Khatri luminaries in different periods and in various segments and areas would no doubt reveal the vitality of the community and its members. It is no longer a moot point whether the Khatris represent the ancient Kshatriyas or they form a sepa-

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rate Group, no doubt distinct from the Rajputs whose position and status were taken by Risley as the yardstick for measuring the status of the Khatris in the social hierarchy of the Hindu community. In fact, the earlist writer Cunningham in his '*History of the Sikhs*' uses the term Kshatriya for Khatris. Campbell also endorses this view. 'The declension of the Kshatriyas', in the words of Cunningham, 'from soldiers and sovereigns into traders and shopkeepers has a parallel in the history of the Jews. Men of active mind will always find employment for themselves, and thus we know what the Greeks became under the victorious Romans'. Campbell points out that 'the warlike conquerors of one age should become astute money-lenders of another is but the ordinary course of history'. Jews, Greeks, Lambards and others are instances in point. He prophesisies that 'when the New Zealanders rule in England, the English may be known as the Khatris of these parts'. The wrong concept about the status of the Khatris in Hindu social hierarchy was initially brought forth by a pseudo—Pandit Jogendra Nath Bhattacharya who was a dismissed employee of the Burdwan Khatri Raj. He gave vent to his feelings against the Raj and the community. The role of the Census Commissioner Risley was equally dubious. He at first accepted Bhattacharya's contention but subsequently retreated after the Bareilly Khatri Conference and the follow up. Finally he accepted the Kshatriya status for the Khatris. The old story need not be repeated here nor the views of old orientalists cited by Seth be repeated here, as these have little relevance in the present context. In fact anthropological study as also a simple analysis of the Khatri blood lend credence to Khatris as true representatives of the old Aryan Kshatriya group. They are described by Campbell as 'superior to other castes in physique, in manliness, and in energy, with their broader and more distinguishing features.

The political historical study of the Khatris, leaving aside the legendary, the traditional, and the solar and lunar family records which have been quoted in the past as authentic source material, might actually be traced from the accounts of the Greek historians, who accompanied Alexander in his campaign. The Parasurama massacre story or that of the persecution of the Kshatriyas by Chandragupta Maurya (called a

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Vrishala in the Brahmanic sources, and a Kshatriya in the Pali and Jain ones) need not be considered here. The authenticity of the source material on which these traditional accounts are based could be questioned. These are very late accounts. There is little support to the theory of Brahmin and Kshatriya clashes. The emergence of a new Kshatriya class as a result of the immigration of foreign races is no doubt acceptable. There are reliable epigraphic and contemporary literary sources testifying to the admission of foreigners into the Brahmanical order, and being accorded the status of Kshatriyas or Sudras. The latter were not ostracized. This process no doubt started with the Greek soldiers accompanying Alexander in his campaign. Many of them settled down in cities named after Alexander. Later on, the Parthians, Sakas, Kushanas and Hunas from Central and Western Asia were absorbed in Hindu society. The Muslims and the Christians who came later retained their separate identity. As such, the neo-Kshatriyas were distinct from earlier Kshatriyas—the *Rajanya* or the nobility of the Aryan race which had come here much earlier.

It has been proposed in some quarters that the Khatris represent the Indo-Greeks who had settled in North-West India after Alexander's departure and the subsequent Indo-Greek rule. This statement belies the observations of Alexander's historians who refer to a republican state of the Kathoi or Katha. They occupied the region to the east of the Hydoaotes (Ravi). They are described as the most powerful nation of India, who strongly resisted Alexander's advance. These people were extremely conscious of beauty which was taken into account in the choice of the ruler. According to the Greek writers here the handsomest person was chosen as the Head of the State. Further, among the Kathoians, the husband and wife chose each other and the system of *Sati* was prevalent among them. Their very name suggests their warlike qualities and tendencies. Another Greek writer sometime later refers to a Kshatriya tribe called Xathroi whose territories lay between the Indus and the lower course of the Akesines (Chenab). As such the Khatris, representing the ancient Kathoi or Xathroi could only be their contemporaries in India and not their successors here. A few centuries later, Ptolemy for the first time mentions Khatrioi who along with some other neigh-

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bouring tribes could be located in the lower Sind region above the Rann of Cutch. From the Indian side, there is a reference to Khatris as Khatiyas in the Nasik record of Siri Pulumavi whose father Siri Gautamiputra Satakarni had defeated the Sakas, Yavanas and Pahlavas and had destroyed the Kshaharata race. These three foreign races represent the Sakas of Central Asia, settled in North-West India, Yavanas or the Indo-Greeks, and Pahlavas or Indo-Parthians. He also destroyed the Kshaharata race to which Nahapana—then ruling Pushkar—and adjoining areas belonged. This record also refers to humbling the pride of the Khatriyas. Taking the entire evidence furnished by the three different sources it is proposed that *Kathoi*, *Khatriaioi* and *Khattiyas* appear to be synonymous—representing the ancient Kshatriyas—Khatris of the later times.

The change over from military to trade as a vocation need not be surprising and there are numerous recorded instances of even Brahmins changing over to much lower professions, such as clevers of wood (*Kashtabhid-Brahmana*). Even among the neo-Kshatriyas—the Rajaputras of the Agnikunda or Fire purification theory, the rank and file, according to Baines, are cultivators, and the Rajput dynasties did not rise to power until sometime after the Huna supremacy had been broken in the sixth century. Further, as pointed out by Baines, once again, many aborigines like the Kols in Chota Nagpur and even those with Mongoloid blood intruded into the category of Rajputs. Nepal, Kangra and Orissa also provided many such instances of tribes or groups figuring in that category. The Khatris alone represent the ancient Kshatriyas with the Saraswata Brahmins acting as their priests, and closely integrated with them. The problem of the Khatris as Kshatriyas of the Vedic times, with their Vedic gotras and *sanskaras* be considered as firmly settled and need not be open to question demanding any explanation.

The distribution of the Khatri population at the beginning of this twentieth century on the basis of 1901 Census provides an index to their migration from the North-Western Frontier and Western Punjab districts towards the east, and finally towards other parts of the country. As pointed out by Rose, this distribution is very well marked. It is strongest in the

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Central districts and in Rawalpindi, Jhelum, Gujrat, Shahpur and Hazara, as also in the Western Hill States. The organization of the Khatris into different groups or sections is also recorded. Firstly the Bari constitute 12 exogamous sections, next the Bunjahis consisting of 52 sub-castes and finally the Sarins. There are different sub-sections in the first group constituting the *Dhai* or *Adhaigharas*—two and a half; the four-including these. The second group has many sub-sections or sub-groups some being typical like the Khokharan, originally of 8 sections (*Atha* or *Ashtajatiya*). The territorial groupings are also recorded, such as Peshawaria and Bharochi from Peshawar and Bhera in Shahpur respectively. Several endogamous groups are also traced in Sialkot. A comprehensive studies of the Khatris of Northern India constituting the area from old Punjab and North-West Frontier to U.P. (now Uttar Pradesh) and part of Bihar would no doubt suggest uniformity in social groupings and gradations, and retention of marriage ceremonies with such variations as might be necessitated by local considerations. The *Pachaiyas—Paceadhe* the western ones and *Purbias—Pawadha*—the Eastern ones—in the past had no marital contacts which were rather regional among the groupings of particular areas. The Khatri *biradari*—congregation at different places under the caste Chaudhary had full hold over the members of the community in that area or group.

As the circle has widened, martial relations are also established on a much wider horizon with greater flexibility in the choice of the life partner and an equally greater relaxation of control of the community over its members. The result, of course, is the weakening of the family ties as also absence of the feeling of kinship. The Khatri families migrating to the South were motivated, for historical reasons, with economic considerations. They were sent there to fill in the vacuum in the break of the economic life in the Deccan as a result of political intrusions from the North. Economic factors were equally responsible for the Khatri migration in Western India through Rajputana and Sind. There are also notices of social tensions created by the Brahmin priestly class compelling some Khatri families to change their religion. They, however, continued to retain their separate social identity and confine their marital relations within their groups. It is evident that while the sub-

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caste names of the Khatris in the south as also in western India were lost and they were submerged in the local ethos, the *Kuladevi*—the family goddess—Sakti continued to be retained by them. The Khatris also remembered their Vedic gotras.

The study of Khatri society from the sociological angle as also the religious outlook of the community members are equally interesting facets. Society is divided into tribal groups like Bunjahi, Sarin, Bahri and Khokaran, as also into artificial groups like *Adhaighar*, *Charzati*, *Panjajati* and *Chahjati*, and again into exogamous sections. These are quoted earlier with reference to Khatris in Punjab. The territorial groups include *Uchhandi*—Khatris of the upper lands meaning north-west Punjab, the Lahorias, the Jhiklu of the plains, the Dogris of the low hills, the Dilwalis (of Delhi) and Agrawala (of Agra) as also the Purbias (of old North-West Province—now U.P.), and now prominent in the Ganga-Jumna Doab areas. There are a number of sub-castes of the Khatris and these too have many sub-sections. The more interesting part is the Khatri caste names. The scientific explanation for such names could be their basis in geographical vocational or even accidental happenings. Some names could be associated with solar and lunar constellations, or military professions and traits. The list of Khatri sub-castes is enormous a little over 600. Family and kinship among the Khatris have closer links under the concept of *Brihat Kutumba* or bigger family. The Khatris are also supposed to follow the *Sanskaras* laid down for a devout Hindu in letter and spirit. The *Brahma* form of marriage with the *saptapadi*—seven steps and *Kanyadana*—gift of daughter in the presence of *Agni*—sacrificial fire is scrupulously followed. The marriage ceremonies might not be performed in such details as was the normal feature decades back when the marriage party could afford to spend atleast three days. It is now a more simplified affair, including the essential rites and their performance. There has never been a bargaining system or *Karardad*, as is fairly common among other communities. The affluent parties, of course, do not fail to exhibit their status and material resources—not an healthy feature in a cultural and progressive society. The other ceremonies and Sanskaras associated with festive occasions are as well observed. Incidently the *mundan* or torsure ceremony, followed by

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Devakaja ceremony, as also the sacred thread ceremony are normal things with Khatris in all parts of the country—even in western and southern India where they have taken to local language, dress and customs. The position of Khatri women in society is a combination of eastern ideals in a modern set up. The fidelity towards the husband wishing him a long life continues to be a normal thing even amongst highly educated and talented married ladies with children and they fast for nearly twenty hours on the occasion of *Karwa-chautha.*

The Khatris constitute a deeply religious community not self-centred but humanitarian in their outlook and helpful to others. Their benevolent activities do not centre round the needy and the poor in the community but towards the society in general. One is not surprised to find Khatri institutions like hospitals, schools and Dharmasalas having on their management non-Khatris. That explains their broad outlook. There was a time when the affiuent Khatris generally set up temples as a pious gesture and spent money on their maintenance by creating trusts. These are not so common now, but are not equally conspicuous by their absence. They worship both Vishnu in his different incarnations as also Siva. The Kuladevata or the family god, and the devi or goddess have a prominent place in the family temple with the mistress of the house looking after the *Puja* or the propitiation part. The Khatri ladies continue to be deeply religious in the observation of festivals with due pomp and sobriety. Some festivities like the *Bhai-Bhaina,* and *Rakhi* are a common, if not the exclusive preserve of the community. Besides soliciting blessings from all deities and divinities—a few totemistic symbols—animals and trees—also figure in the list of their propitiation items. Their secular attitude is equally noticeable in a few old conservative families revering Syed Saheb with his niche or *ala* or a small room (*kothri*) and paying visit to some Muslim divine. The life style of a Khatri family is one of contentment in prosperity, God-fearing attitude in worldly matters, and an equanimity of mind. They are extremely self-respecting and even a poor Khatri would consider himself as an equal partner in the social set-up.

The history of the Khatris in the Medieval and modern period is equally interesting for the contributions made by them

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in different field—as administrators, soldiers and commanders, literateurs, social thinkers and religious reformers. The Khatris as an integral part of the old Kshatriya caste no doubt differ from the neo-Kshatriyas, the Rajaputras or Rajputs, who are supposed to have sprung from the fire pit (*agnikula*), symbolising the purification of such foreigners as entered India in the fifth and sixth centuries A.D. The term Khatri is not noticed as such in inscriptions or literature or even in foreign accounts of Arab writers. An inscription of the tenth century from Ahar in Bulandsahr district mentions *Kshatraya*, and another one from Ghatiyala of the same time records *Prakriti*. The term Brahma-Kshatriya appears in the records of the Senas of Bengal. The *Prithviraj-Raso* of Chanda Bardai notices *Chatriya*, *Chhatri*, and at one place mentions the name of a Khatri named Bhima who entertained the poet at his house in Ghazni. In another record from Ladnu (old Jodhpur State) of 1316 A.D. of the time of Ala-ud-din, a person named Sadharana is mentioned as the treasurer of the emperor who is considered as a Khatri by caste. He is also called Mahatha *Thakura*. The term *Thakur* is not used for the Thakur class but as Bhandarkar rightly suggests, is generally used by Khatris when addressing their *Samdhis*—father-in-law of son or daughter. One very frequently hears at the time of the marriage preliminaries—the priest pronouncing—so much money is given by such person as *pucha* to *Takura* Saheb (from the girls father to that of the bridegroom). The Khatris as a class were both in the civil and military wings of administration under Alauddin Khilji who is equally mentioned in traditional accounts as the proposer of widow-remarriage among the Khatris. Lallu & Jagadhar as emissaries of this proposal from the emperor have attained a proverbial fame.

Later references to Khatris and their role are also available. They were introduced as Hindu bankers and changers at Vijayanagar in the south in 1360. The political role of the Khatri administrators under the Saiyads of Delhi is recorded in *Tawarikha Mubarak*. Three names figure prominently—Siddharama, Sindhupala and Kaju Khatri. Mubarak Shah is said to have patronised the Khatris of Delhi. Some Khatris also joined the Khokharans led by Jasarath in the Delhi-Punjab politics of the time. A Khokhar Khatri Pindi Das was the most impor-

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tant personality of the town of Shaikhapur. The Khatris continued to enjoy position and power under the Lodis and under the Mughals as well. Raizada Uggar Sena, a Nanda Khatri, had come to Lahore with Babar from Afghanistan. Todarmal distinguished himself under Sher Shah and Akbar, while Raja Bikramajit—the name given to Haridas Rai attained highest distinction under Jehangir. There were two other Khatris, Diwan Das and Kishan Das who held offices at that time. In Shah Jehan's time Sunder Das Khatri received the title of Raja and there were many Khatri Subedars, faujdars, high nobles and administrators at that time. The Khatris in the time of Aurangzeb figured only in the lower rung of administration both at the Centre and in Punjab. Several names along with their sub-castes are known from a later work—*Char Bagh-i-Punjab* of Ganesh Das.

The position of the Khatris in the spheres of trade and commerce is recorded by foreign writers. Manrique testifies to the enormous wealth of the Khatris in the 17th century in Ahmedabad and Surat. The Khatri Sarafs were also diwans or Khazanedars in the royal establishment. The Khatri merchants of Dacca at the other end of the country possessed so much money that it used to be weighed rather than counted. In Delhi too the vast sum of money piled up resembled like heaps of grain.

Besides distinguishing themselves in administration and amassing wealth through trade and commerce, the Khatris in the medieval period also produced saints and philosophers. Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism was a Bedi Khatri and so also his successors were all Khatris. Nanak's successor Angad was a Trehan Khatri followed by Amar Das, a Bhalla Khatri, while Ram Das was of Sodhi sub-caste. He was succeeded by his son Arjuna. The dynastic succession continued under Har Govind, Har Rai, Teg Bahadur and finally Guru Govind Singh. There were several other Khatri religious teachers with a mission and having a good many followers. These include Baba Shahana (c. 1600) of Sataghara (Montgomery district). Dial Dhan with Ramanandi Bairagi followers, Shamji of Dipalpur, who founded a temple of Krishna in Dera Ghazi Khan and finally Maluk Das of Kara, Allahabad.

In the eighteenth century, the centre of political gravity.

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shifts from Centre to provinces and the Khatri administrators now figure in local kingdoms. There were Khatri administrators and commanders in the Sikh kingdom of Ranjit Singh. These include Hari Singh Nalwa, Mohkam Chand and Sawan Mal, Bolu Mal, a Khanna Khatri, Mohkam Chand's son Moti Ram and Sawan Mal's son Mul Raj who had taken up cudgels against the British. The Khatris continued to hold many hereditary posts like that of Qanungo in Punjab as recorded by Ganesh Das in the early 19th century. They also held other positions in the later half of the nineteenth century. In Central India and in the Deccan, the role of Ayamal in the Maratha power rivalry and that of Chandu Lal in Nizam's administration needs proper investigation and fuller evaluation. The former was a very popular figure and in great demand among the Maratha powers while Chandu Lal and his family continued to enjoy Nizam's patronage even till the early part of the twentieth century.

The Khatris of Delhi and other centres of Northern India held prominent positions under the British and they equally contributed in other areas. Reference to important Khatris of Northern India and their contributions to welfare, charitable and public activities has been assessed and recorded. The wind of change brought about by the introduction of western education had its impact on the Khatri community. That explains for the highest percentage of English literacy among the Khatris of Punjab in the last century. Their contributions in the field of literature and science has been suitably brought out. There were many Khatri scholars who contributed to Persian literature, while Hindi had its protoganists like Devakinandan Khatri who revolutionised Hindi literature with his facile pen and created innumerable lovers of the language interested in reading his *Chandrakanta Santati*. The list of both Persian and Hindi Khatri literateurs is fairly respectable and representative. Kashi or Banaras (Varanasi), however, seemed to be the seat or centre of Khatri Hindi writers and scholars. The last in the series of course was Shyam Sunder Das, one of the founders of the Nagari Pracharini Sabha. Reference has also been made to important Khatri writers of the present century. There are also distinguished Khatri Journalists, the names of the prominent figures are recorded. Eminent Jurists, Scientists and educa-

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tionalists belonging to this community have equally made notable contributions in their respective areas even in the last century as also in the present one. This evidently reveals the dynamic approach of the community and its members, trying to keep pace with scientific advancement, and technological progress. As distinguished scientists they have been members of the Royal Society as also recipient of the Noble Prize in their disciplines. Such worldwide recognition of the contributions of these eminent Khatris is a matter of pride and more than that of satisfaction for the community as a whole.

The Khatris have also been men of aesthetic taste. Fine arts, music, dance, drama and films have equally attracted Khatri youngmen and women. The Kapoor family of Prithviraj stands foremost in the Indian Film world which has produced many Khatri actors and actresses. The soft, sweet, melodious music of Saigal still enchants people in all parts of the country. The Khatris have been pioneers in the Film industry and have contributed towards its development and prosperity. They continue to figure prominently in the different segments of this industry from acting, direction and production to distribution and exhibition of films.

The role of the Khatris in the Freedom Struggle has equally been specific from the very beginning. They participated from the very first session of the Congress held at Bombay in 1885 and provided front rank honest politicians devoted to the cause. Their patriotism and record is unblemished and sacrifice sufficient to warrant proper recognition. An analysis, however, reveals that they all lacked something which counts a lot in political manoeuvring. One need not dilate it further.

The Khatris are no doubt fragmented into different groups, sub-groups and even allied groups, including the Aroras, Soods, Bhatias. The Muslim and Sikh Khatris have their separate identity, although marital relationship between Hindu and Sikh Khatris was quite a normal thing and there continue to be blood relations among these two. Emotional integration or atleast an urge to do so is not wanting even among the Muslim Khatris but this could be brought about only with the passage of time and when religion ceases to be a barrier for marital union in a recognised way and accepted by society at large. This might take more time than one could visualize since it

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involves a complete divorce from past traditions, customs and norms. The political factor could as well impose a strong brake on this move.

A question which is frequently mooted out is the relevance of the caste in modern society which is supposed to be egalitarian. This question was raised even more than a hundred years back and several western writers and thinkers have expressed their view points. Sir William Mains in the sixties of the last century condemned the system in his work entitled *Ancient Law* as the most disastrous and blighting of all human institutions. Rabindra Nath Tagore described it as 'a gigantic system of cold-blooded repression'. He expressed the view that the regeneration of the Indian people directly and perhaps solely depended on its removal. An English writer Joseph Chailley in his book *Problems of British India* expressed the view that 'caste bars out altruism, unity and patriotism, and that its rules render true social life and progress impossible'. As against these negative aspects of the caste system, Monier-William Boden Professor of Sanskrit at Oxford, in his book *Brahmanism and Hinduism* contended that 'caste has been useful in promoting self-sacrifice, in securing subordination of the individual to an organized body, in restraining from vice, in preventing pauperism.' So also Meredith Townsend in his work *Europe and Asia* wrote: 'I firmly believe caste to be a marvellous discovery, a form of socialism which through ages has protected Hindoo society from anarchy and from the worst evils of industrial and competitive life—it is an automatic poor-law to begin with and the strongest form known of trade union'. The views of Edwin Montagu on this subject are also worth quoting: 'Caste seems to me to be at present the enduring fibre of Indian organization, and unless there is a western social awakening in India to replace it, to lose it would produce anarchy, for the correcting hand, which puts things in order would be gone'.

In the light of the above observations it can be suggested that the existence of caste system has not been a bane to progressive development of society. On the other hand, caste system and its rules ensure a proper projection of personality of an individual belonging to a particular group. It also ensures a safety-valve against pauperism of a member of the community

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who can equally look upon the family and the caste for his protection and help in times of need. Regional, political and party interests, however, have tended to make caste as a pressure group in politics for soliciting bloc votes of a community. This has resulted in a clear-cut wedge in the political fibre of Indian society. It is suggested that 'new fields for caste distinction and rivalries have been provided by the introduction of universal franchise, community development projects and argumentation of benefits for backward classes. Class and party interests link people of different castes and groups, and make caste a polarised political institution rather than an innocent social fabric to look after the interest of its members'.

In the final analysis from historical and sociological angle, the Khatris and Khatri society need a proper organization and a standardised set-up to bring about cohesion, fraternal love and fellow-feeling in the community. The Khatris seem to be over-advanced in their outlook, relaxing or even ignoring rules that determine the formation and proper existence of a dignified social order. It would be a dangerous situation if the community with its glorious past and healthy traditions, as the true representatives of the Aryan nobility, proud of its purity of blood should relapse into a slough of hybrid culture. It has to wake up. The present historical background could only serve as a source of inspiration if not of guidance in framing the life style of the community and its members. There are extremely affluent families, dipped in western norms and nuances and also very poor ones as well. The vast gap between the two has to be bridged in a spirit of fellow-feeling and fraternal unity. This subjective element is an otherwise objective study of the history of the community, is introduced here, for 'history is all bunkum, if it cannot provide guidance to the present for a better future'.

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Glossary

Athamaya —The ceremony performed during the eight month of pregnancy.

Bhaibhaina —A special festival among the Khatris celebrated in July-August with the sisters praying for the long life of their brothers.

Brahma —The only accepted from of marriage among the Khatris characterised with *Saptapadi*—seven steps round the sacrificial fire, and *Kanyadana*—the gift of the daughter to the bridegroom.

Devakaja —Sanskrit *Devakarya*—the propitiation ceremony performed by the young lady after the tonsure ceremony of her son.

Gahna pahnana —The ornamentation ceremony done by the ladies of the bridegroom side at the house of the bride as a part of the engagement ceremony.

Gayatrimantram —The sacred formulae in Praise of Gayatri, same as *Savitramantra* prescribed for the *dvijas*—the three upper castes.

Jajmani —The sacrificial priests clientage.

Jauda —The dinner given at the bride's house after the wedding.

Kalasa —The earthern pitcher covered with a wicker saucer lamp placed in the centre of the sacrificial area and propitiated.

Karardad —Monetary settlement in marriage forbidden among the Khatris.

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Karwachauth —A special fast kept for the long life of the husband lasting full twenty-four hours.

Kathautinahana —The bath taken by the bridegroom after marriage at his in-law's place.

Kanyadana —Bestowing the gift of the daughter, an essential part of a Hindu marriage.

Kriya —The Purification ceremony on the 13th day after cremation with the tieing of turban, signifying his consecration.

Kwardhoti —A pre-nuptial ceremony involving the despatch of clothes, henna etc. for the bride.

Manjha —The ceremony involving moving of lighted small wicker lamps placed in a brass plate round the face of the bride and bridegroom separately.

Mailrakhna or Mayan —The Purification ceremony with the mother seated at the back of the daughter, in the afternoon preceding the marriage night.

Namakarana —The name ceremony of the baby.

Punsavara or Bhode —The Post-Conception ceremony performed in the fourth month of cere-

mony.

Pesbgara —The Procession from the bridal side going to the bridegroom house—with the mutual embracing of the parents and other relations of the two sides and formal offering of cash—*patole ki puchha*.

Sagotra —Identical lineage from the Rishi claimed as Guru.

Sabhala —The Grooms young nephew.

Sagai —A simple engagement ceremony performed with sweets, fruits and a nominal cash offering.

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Sanskaras	**—Rites and Rituals prescribed for a Hindu.**
Saptapadi	**—The seven steps jointly taken by the bride and bridegroom round the sacrificial fire.**
Shantipujan	**—Also known as Sat Bangali—The Ganesh Pujan performed by the eldest male head of the family.**
Sohagrat	**—The Honeymoon night.**
Suhagin	**—A married lady with her living husband.**
Tilabatti or Tilawat	**—The anointing ceremony.**
Tani	**—An earthern cup containing rice, red powder (roli), betelnut—all wrapped in a red coloured piece of cloth and hung in the centre of *Bedi*—sacrificial courtyard.**
Tika	**—The second Presentation preceding the formal marriage ceremony.**

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